Cola
IS THIS WEEK YOUR CHANCE TO SAY YES?

BUSINESS / B3-1 LIFESTYLE / F3 ACROSS / A20

**RP property boom:** Sector shows no signs of cooling down

**Top classical artists** in concert to raise funds for rescue dogs

**Bauang declares** state of calamity over rabies cases

## 'Lola' sends off Marian images to poor villages

By TJ Burgonio

AT 93, ASUNCION LEYSA PAVIA DOES NOT show signs of slowing down. She prays for rosary beads a day, reads inspirational books and watches Tri Mass at night.

Unknown to many, save for her family

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS
Monday, September 17, 2007 ★★ 12 sections / Vol. 31 / No. 281 P18

**VIVA LA VIRGEN!** Thousands of devotees join the procession for Our Lady of Peñafrancia, patroness of Bicolandia, before marathoner parade in Naga City.

# Erap open to amnesty

## But he wants to read 'fine print' of proposal first

By Christian V Esguerra and Kristine L. Alave

CONVICTED FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA is open to the idea of being granted amnesty, but he wants to see the "fine print" of any such proposal first and wants it clear that acceptance does not signify guilt, a close ally said yesterday.

Rep. Fadel Rodriguez, spokesperson of Estrada's Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino, said Estrada considered amnesty a logical corrective given what he called the "political dictation" handed down by the Sandiganbayan which sentenced him of plunder in a P4.1 billion case.

"The President (Estrada) is open to the idea of amnesty," Rodriguez told the Inquirer, recalling their 15-minute phone conversation on Saturday night. "But he has to see the fine print of the proposal."

Rodriguez said he and Estrada talked after the ex-President's legal team came to his Tanay rest house, where the amnesty issue had surfaced. Estrada detained until further notice.

Rodriguez said the decision of the team was to file a motion for reconsideration.

Estrada's particularly wanted to study the details of the "all-encompassing" amnesty

(SEE P. A-5)

## Businessmen still cautious after verdict

By Armanda Dorotan

THE FINANCIAL MARKETS have reacted to former President Joseph Estrada's conviction for plunder with enormous relief amid the calm public acceptance of the amnesty recommendation's verdict that sentenced him to life.

This time around, however, stocks after the Sandiganbayan handed down its historic verdict on Wednesday. The peso rebounded to 46.71 to the US dollar, a sharp gain from the previous day's 47.12.

Stock prices closed 1.21 percent higher on Wednesday reversing from a two-day slump. The calm reminders of the six-year trial was not the singular factor that sparked the rebound. The rally was a positive response to the court decision and was helped by the prospects of a reduction this week by the US Federal Reserve of its benchmark interest rate.

That means that the markets'

BUSINESS/B4 A.1P

**ANALYSIS**

## *Coconuts to fuel growth in Pacific*

MAJURO, MARSHALL Islands—The first thing you notice about a diesel engine running on coconut oil is the stink.

"It smells sweet. You can put your nose right up to the exhaust," says Wayne Barry, assistant manager of the Tobolar Copra processing plant in the Marshall Islands capital of Majuro.

Smelling just like coconut biscuits straight out of the oven, the exhaust is a big improvement on an old diesel engine belching acrid black smoke.

All over the Pacific, power authorities, private companies and entrepreneurs have been experimenting with coconut oil as an alternative to diesel fuel for vehicles, power generators and even ships.

"The idea goes right the way back to 1911. Rudolf Diesel. He invented the combustion engine to run peanut oil," says Jerry Kramer, chief executive of Pacific International Inc., a company processing the use of coconut oil in the Marshall Islands.

The rate of coconut oil retrieved a boost in the last couple of years as oil prices hit record highs and coconut oil fell to around $168 per ton in the volatile world commodity markets.

Coconut growers found re-

COCONUTS/A-9

## Senate millionaires club: Villar is richest

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL Villar is the richest senator while Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV is the poorest.

Based on his latest statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN), Villar, the Senate boy who made good selling low-cost houses, listed his net worth as P922.4 million, up less than 1 percent from the P913.6 million he declared in 2005.

Villar, who ranked No. 29 in Forbes Asia's 40 richest Filipinos with a $110-million fortune, announced for 47

SENATE/A-5

## GMA men seen to snub 'Hello Garci' quiz today

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christina O. Arenaldo

THE SENATE BLUE RIBBON PUTS "Hello Garci" investigation today, with former military intelligence agent Vidal Doble Jr. as the key witness.

But other witnesses, notably government and military officials, are expected to snub the hearing on the intercepted conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which they allegedly talked about manipulating the 2004 presidential elections.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said the Senate had yet to receive responses from the personalities who were invited to attend the hearing to shed light on "Project Lighthouse," the alleged wiretapping operation conducted by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) during the 2004 elections.

(SEE P. A-5)

## 100 convicts want to serve Erap's term

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WHEN JOSEPH ESTRADA opened some 100 death sentences from executions while he was President, little did he know his act of mercy would bring him good karma—in his own form of trouble.

Those reminders—death row convicts, now serving life sentences at the New Bilibid Prisons (for murder, rape or some other heinous crime, have written a letter expressing their

(SEE P. A-5)

# MILF offers to pull out forces in Basilan, Sulu

IN A GESTURE OF GOODWILL ahead of an anticipated resumption of peace talks, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) yesterday announced that it had offered to abandon its strongholds in Basilan and Sulu so the military could go after Abu Sayyaf bandits.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said over local radio the rebels would move out of their strongholds in Basilan and Sulu "to give way to a big military offensive" against Abu Sayyaf militants.

"We are prepared to leave the areas, on certain conditions, including the security and subsistence of the families of our fighters," Kabalu said. "We want to apply that to avoid misencounters" with the military, he added.

Kabalu said the offer to withdraw only means their camps are a "sign of sincerity and cooperation so that the government could focus on the law

(SEE P. A-5)

MILF rebels take their weapons during a drill in Barangay Simuay in Maguindanao.

**WEATHER FORECAST**

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# DOJ to focus on scams, killings

## Acting Secretary Devanadera to also look into old, urgent cases

By Lala B. Salsarris

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WILL GIVE PRIORITY to cases involving investment scams and extrajudicial killings, including those of members of the media, under the watch of acting Secretary Agnes Devanadera.

Devanadera, who is also the Solicitor General, said she would work to decrease the backlog of cases as the 2832 unit had begun an inventory of the oldest and most urgent cases it...

...mally would be disposed of.

Devanadera is at the helm of the DOJ in the absence of Secretary Raul Gonzalez who is on medical leave.

Devanadera said Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño had grouped the cases according to...

...ype to make it easier to see which cases should be taken care of first.

"The way I see it now, because of the volume [of cases] after seeing the inventory, I think we have to move them cases and address the more urgent ones and the old ones regardless of the nature of the cases," she said.

Devanadera said that focusing on investment and pyramiding scams was important given the number of people that have been victimized.

"There are people who have invested their life savings. I'm hoping that other people will not victimized because of the...

...ir countrymen. But I know [those] from the provinces, they are really vulnerable. It's usually the retirement pay of teachers, of soldiers [that is affected]," she said.

Among the more prominent scams was one involving foreign exchange trading firm Dollar...

...nances Investment Products Corp. (DPIC) which allegedly defrauded its clients of millions of dollars, and Hyacinthe, an Internet-based pyramiding scheme.

Extrajudicial and media killings, on the other hand, are a hardy perennial concern, with the government, the military and law enforcers taken to task by critics for failing to solve the killings.

The Supreme Court even organized a multibarangay summit to come up with solutions to address the extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

The human rights group Bantayan has said that more than 800 people have been killed—alleged...

...ly by security forces—since 2001. More than 200 of the victims were left-wing activists, it said. At least 180 cases of involuntary disappearances had also been recorded.

Since 2001, 33 journalists have also been killed.

Devanadera, meanwhile, said she would not reduce the number of people working in the OSJI.

"I'm not here to fire, but I'm here to hire," she said.

# Mendoza tells cadets NBN deal 'all right, sir!'

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—Commander Commissioner Secretary Leandro Mendoza assured cadets of the Philippine Military Academy that the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) project was "on the level," when he declared "All right, sir!" during a closed-door testimonial luncheon with PMA cadets on Saturday.

"All right, sir!" is a cadet salutation that tells a PMA "classmate" (classmate) that what a fellow cadet is saying is the absolute truth, like, fact. Leopoldo Mallegdy, PMA superintendent, explained on Sunday.

Mendoza did not read his prepared speech. Instead, he showed the cadets a copy of a national newspaper which had described the...

...dra as a member of PMA Class '69.

It was the same salutation that Sen. Panfilo Lacson, also a PMA classmate, used to challenge the credibility of then Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes at the height of the controversy surrounding the alleged misuse of intelligence funds.

But Reyes, another PMA classmate, did not reply to the challenge and insisted that he remained "under oath."

"All right, sir!" is part of the interaction among PMA alumni who...

...are obliged to adhere to the PMA honor system.

The 1906 honor code forbids cadets from lying, cheating or stealing, and does not approve of a cadet or an alumnus who tolerates violators.

Mendoza proffered the explanation after describing the...

...ion of a national broadband network in government, Mallegdy told the...

Mallegdy said the cadets were aware of the NBN controversy.

But he said the real lesson "this scandal has taught them is that the honor system can remain part of their lives 30 years into their careers."

Mallegdy said Mendoza's "All right, sir!" salutation proved this.

Mendoza had been invited to attend a parade in his honor, even before the NBN scandal broke out, Mallegdy said.

But he accepted the invitation only this week because it coincided with a national forum of the Department of Transportation and Communications' regional executives at Camp John Hay here, he said.

## WHAT'S INSIDE


**JONAS CASE** could go up to SC, says Esperon /A4

**PRISONERS** get 'catered' food at national penitentiary /A6

**ARMM PUPILS** score lowest in achievement test /A8



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# Aiko Finally Reveals The Secret To Her Weight-Loss

She was one of Philippine cinema's favorite young sweethearts who eventually evolved into a more accomplished, mature actress – and then some. Actress. Mother. Public Official. Aiko Melendez has assumed many roles not only in front of the cameras, but also under the watchful eyes (and sometimes merciless scrutiny) of the public. One of the visible "changes" in Aiko was her transformation from being naturally slim to being overweight. From a 28-inch waistline, she went up to a 37, something she didn't think would happen.

"I've been slim almost half of my life," Aiko shares. "I was athletic, I used to swim. I never thought I'd end up getting weight." How did she end up gaining all the excess weight? "I think it started with my pregnancy," Aiko recalls. "Kasi during my first pregnancy, I had the notion that I could eat anything I wanted because I was eating 'for two.' So I spoiled myself. And I ended up gaining a drastic amount of weight! Imagine, I even went up to a 37-inch waistline!"

Used to being slim, Aiko was unprepared for the emotional toll her weight gain would take on her. "I felt really bad," she remembers. "When I went to the mall, people would just come up to me and say, 'Aiko, anong nangyari? Bakit ang laki-laki na ng katawan mo?' and I'm just standing there just hoping a hole would open up to swallow me. I really lost my self-confidence. I felt like a frumpy. I couldn't even dress well. When you're fat, limited ang clothes mo."

She was desperate to lose the weight – fast. However, this meant resorting to rash decisions in finding weight loss solutions. "I tried every diet there is!" Aiko recalls. "South Beach, Atkins, Adidas – you name it, I've tried it! But when I lost a bit of weight, I had a tendency to be lax. So I'd end up eating and gaining weight again. I also tried diet pills, but I ended up getting hospitalized because of it. I felt so pressure building up, I was getting palpitations and I was becoming irritable. I also had problems with my blood circulation."

Eventually she thought she found a solution in liposuction. "I had liposuctions done to various parts of the body – my arms, my back, my legs, my tummy – basically everywhere. And yeah, you do lose the weight. But if you don't watch your diet or exercise and regain the weight again, it becomes double, even triple of what you lost before. What's more, I was told you can only have at least 3 lipo's in your lifetime. 'Cause it can affect your heart, your blood and the anesthesia used can even affect your memory! Plus when I gained weight again, I noticed bumps/pouching in different parts of the body. It wasn't proportionate."

She became hopeful when the sure-slim brand Marie France's transformation from gaining post-pregnancy weight to regaining down to body proportion was featured on the local press for its weight gain!. Down went from 140 to an amazing 126 lbs. thanks to religiously committing to Marie France treatments.

"Seeing how Marie France worked for Dawn inspired me," Aiko says. "Achieving my ideal weight has become very important. I was about 181 lbs. when I first came to Marie France. The treatments were working and I saw how I was slowly but surely losing the pounds. However, after a few months of treatment, I had to stop because of elections where I ran for Quezon City Councilor. The stress from that also made me lose a couple of pounds. Then after that, I went straight back to Marie France to continue my program. In two months, I lost 17 lbs.! As of now, I'm already 148 lbs! I'm still a work in progress, though. I'm hoping to reach my ideal weight in my 130's to 135 lbs."

Aiko has nothing but raves for the Marie France treatments: "With Marie France kasi, it's safe. There are no medications, no crazy dieting, no surgery. It's purely machines working on your body. You just lie down and relax! My top 3 favorite treatments are: Endermologie, Velasmooth, and Physique."

Friends who have seen her transformation have been encouraging reactions. "They tell me, 'Ang ganda ng pagkakaroon! Parang gumanda ako,' and I tell them I do Marie France treatments. I'm very pleased with the results!" Plus I feel healthier too! So a huge thanks to Marie France for all the nice comments I've been getting. But I'm not done yet! Just you wait...I'm going to get even slimmer," Aiko promises confidently.

*Like Aiko, you can also lose the excess weight the healthy, easy, non-surgical way. Call Marie France today at 894-BODY (2639) Cebu (032) 233-7637, Pampanga (045) 961-2981 for a free consultation.*

# Aiko: I Went From a 37 to a 32-Inch Waistline!

"I never thought I'd end up being overweight. I used to be slimmer in my younger years. When I gained weight and went up to a 37-inch waistline, my life changed. I started losing acting projects. People would come up to me and tell me outright that I was fat. It really made me lose my confidence! I had liposuction done but when I gained excess weight again, it was triple of what I lost before. As for diets – you name it, I've tried it. I just kept losing and gaining again. Then Dawn (Zulueta), who's a close friend, recommended Marie France. I was encouraged by her weight-loss success story. I started going regularly and so far I've already slimmed down to a 32-inch waistline! I'm still a work in progress but so far I feel better because I know I look slimmer and healthier!"

**– Aiko Melendez**
Actress and Public Official

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# AFP: Jonas case may go all the way up to SC

By Nikko Dizon

THE ARMED FORCES of the Philippines is prepared to fight all the way to the Supreme Court to accept by the family of Jonas Burgos to its investigation report on how the former photo of an impounded jeep ended up on the vehicle used in his kidnapping, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said.

"The final arbiter here could be the Supreme Court, with all my respect to the lower courts," the AFP chief of staff told the business in an interview on Friday.

Esperon also admitted that when he announced that he would release the report in compliance with an order of the Court of Appeals, he was unaware that government lawyers were joined to file a motion for reconsideration.

A week after the announcement that closed Burgos' mother, Edilita, Esperon said the AFP would "submit all legal answers" to keep the report confidential.

## Held in contempt

"In the end, if the court orders us to release the report, we will release it," he pointed out.

The Jolito Kilosang Mumahadlik ng Filipinas (KMP) said that Esperon should be held in contempt if he continued to refuse to release the report despite an order from the opposite court.

"He was the one who said that they would comply with the court order, now they are backing out. He should be held responsible for this and for prolonging the agony of Jonas Burgos' family and friends," Danilo Ramos, KMP secretary general, said in a statement yesterday.

On Sept. 7, Esperon said he would release the report as ordered by the Court of Appeals, after it rejected the Solicitor General's petition to quash the subpoena for the document.

A week later, Assistant Solicitor General Amparo Tang said she had explained to Esperon that all legal remedies should first be exhausted before the military would release the report.

## Subpoenaed

The family of Burgos has been trying to get a copy of the AFP Presidential Blue Ribbon committee's investigation report on the fate of former plant 'BAR-196' that was on a prospective custody of the Bataan Industry Battalion in Orion.

The former plant was spotted on one of the vehicles used by the abductors of Burgos, 26, son of the late newspaper publisher and press freedom icon Jose "Joe" Burgos.

The military in past was subpoenaed as part of the hearing on the petition for writ of habeas corpus filed by Edita Burgos, who has accused the military of being involved in the kidnapping.

Jonas Burgos, an agriculturist, was actively missing possession of the use of organic fertilizer when he was abducted on April 28 from the front Gomez mall in Fairview, Quezon City.

But, police have said Burgos was a political officer of the communist New People's Army who was kidnapped by his own comrades.


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# What's cooking? Caterer serves up 'adobe' at Bilibid

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHAT'S COOKING AT THE New Bilibid Prisons?

At the congressional hearing on the proposed 2008 national budget last week, Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) Director Reynaldo Dupaal made a stunning revelation: Prisoners' meals at the country's premiere facility were being "catered."

"We have a catering service now," he told the incredulous lawmakers, who took it as a joke.

The congressmen were quizzing Dupaal on the Department of Justice's proposed P127 billion budget for next year. The BuCor, which is under the department, stands to receive P1.3 billion.

"So, what's on the menu?" Senator Dupaal (Bilibid) Leandro Verzosa asked.

Dupaal said inmates enjoyed sausage and coffee for breakfast, smoked fish and rice for lunch, and dying (dried salted fish) and rice for dinner. On a good day, he said they were served "adobe"—sic, adobe—with rice for lunch.

"Was beef there adobe?" Verzosa asked, triggering more laughter.

One lawmaker asked a colleague if the sausages on the NBP menu were "German franks."

The image of the NBP—one of crowded cells, insufficient medications, dilapidated facilities, and generally inhumane conditions—was apparently not lost on those who heard Dupaal's comments.

As of 2004, the NBP housed a total of 16,747 prisoners, a figure more than twice its 8,700 capacity.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, chair of the committee on appropriations, noted that P697 million were allocated a daily food allowance of only P40, or P13.33 for every meal.

"You have to look into that upward allocation," he told Undersecretary Ernesto Agnes Devanadera, who had presented the department's proposed budget in charge temporarily in DOJ Officer-in-Charge Raul Gonzalez' absence.

Devanadera said the DOJ had previously requested that the daily meal allowance be increased to P60, but didn't get approved.

In one point, Lagman said, "We've abolished the death penalty, but I'm afraid these inmates might die of malnutrition."


A MESSAGE TO OUR REGULATORS & LEGISLATORS

## LOWER POWER COSTS, SPEED-UP POLICY REFORMS

In view of our commitment to the Joint Congressional Power Commission **JCPC of the 13th Congress**, the Consumer & Oil Price Watch (**COPW**) continue to be vigilant and ensure that ***ANY price adjustments in electricity rates are reasonable and in accordance with the law.***

Our responsibility is to the consuming public. ***To keep them informed*** of the present economic conditions, ***oversee that fair pricing is maintained, protect the Filipino consumers' rights,*** and ***lobby for measures*** to mitigate the impact of price increases.

The Amendments as proposed in ***SB 1234 & HB 1899***, will also remedy the defects of the power reform law, especially in the Transco Privatization. We therefore support the amendments that will provide options and speed-up Transco's privatization.

***COPW SUPPORTS*** the Proposed Amendments of Senator Enrile ***(SN 1234) & HB 1899*** of Representative Miguel Arroyo, Chairman House Committee on Energy and ***will work closely with Congress and the Power Sector, to ensure transparency in the implementation of rate adjustments.***

***COPW SUPPORTS THE ENRILE AMENDMENT*** that the ERC, acting as a Quasi-Judicial body, shall conduct public hearings on ***ALL APPLICATIONS FOR RATE INCREASES***, and henceforth will ***NOT BE ALLOWED TO ISSUE PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY*** for electricity rate increases.

***COPW proposes that ERC must, within 60 days from billing period of distribution utilities, private sector generating plants, NPC, TRANSCO, PSALM, verify and decide if the increase is correct with finality.***

### *A TRIPLE WHAMMY TO CONSUMERS*

Consumers face a triple whammy due to the following:

1. ***First Whammy.*** Meralco has a Cumulative Increase ***NOT yet recovered from September 2006 to June 2007 of P5.1949 per kwh.*** ***COPW Position*** is to stagger this monthly increase of ***77 centavos*** per kWh over a 12 month period from September 2007 to August 2008.
2. ***Second Whammy.*** The Philippine Electricity Market Corp. (PEMC) has ***to collect from Luzon distribution utilities (DUs) an estimated P5.11 per kWh covering the unsettled cost from September and October billing months in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM).***

   COPW will monitor and ensure that ***consumers will not fully absorb the P5.11 per kWh additional cost as DUs ONLY BOUGHT A PORTION OF THEIR POWER SUPPLY FROM WESM*** during the period in question.
3. ***Third Whammy. COPW is opposed to the Performance Based Rate*** setting Methodology recently ***approved by the ERC, to take effect on January 1, 2008.***

Consumers have long been bearing the brunt of high power cost and inefficient power services... The ***EPIRA aims to ensure competition in the power industry to eventually bring down the cost of electricity....***

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***COPW SUPPORTS THE AMENDMENTS IN THE EPIRA*** as introduced by Senator Enrile and Representative Mikey Arroyo that would help attain ***the much delayed open access & retail competition as follows:***

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PARTICIPANTS in Bike for Life to raise funds for child cancer patients roll out from Antipolo on the 14-day road trip that will take them to Davao City. PHOTO

# Father bikes to save son with cancer

By Nestor Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LIKE A PROFESSIONAL CYCLIST PREPARing for a big race, Robert Castito has been seriously training the past two months for the long-distance bond.

But unlike many competitive cyclists, who bike for fame and fortune, the 42-year-old father of four is fired up by a more daunting quest—to save his son's life.

With a borrowed mountain bike, Castito yesterday kicked off from Antipolo, Montalban City, on a 1,300-kilometer, 14-day bike marathon that hopes to raise at least P1 million for medications for his son, Marijoi Jose, who is afflicted with lymphoma and other beneficiaries of the Cancer Warriors Foundation (CWF).

Castito, who was himself diagnosed with Bell's palsy a few months ago, knows he would need more than good physical conditioning to survive the long back-breaking marathon dubbed "Bike for Life 3: A Journey of Courage and Hope."

Aside from Castito, eight other fathers of young cancer patients, as well as CWF volunteers and supporters like entertainer Kimpoy de Jesus-Thompson, joined the push of bikers.

### Founder had brain cancer

Also in the group was Jenny Asaro, a former cancer survivor who founded CWF more than seven years ago.

"I know this cancer can still not be cure for us. But just seeing our child somehow fighting for their lives is enough motivation for us to go on," said Asaro, his voice cracking.

The concerns over cure to increase public awareness of childhood cancer and raise the attention of the national government to the problem.

Castito admitted it was very hard to accept the fact that of 15-year-old son who was diagnosed more than a year ago.

"It just started with a mass on my son's left hand. Then he started to complain about the pain in his back. Soon after, we were told by the doctor that my son was suffering from lymphoma.

He said the emotional burden of their family was made worse by the financial difficulty they are facing. Marijoi Jose's needs to undergo chemotherapy once a week in the state-owned Philippine Children's Medical Center in Quezon City. Minus the medication and other prescription drugs, the procedure costs P8,000.

Even during one of his weekly chemotherapy sessions that Castito and Asaro and the volunteers of the foundation.

Castito said his salary as a salesman was simply not enough to provide for the medications and weekly chemotherapy of Marijoi Jose and still support the studies of his three other children, or even pay the rent of their small apartment in Valenzuela City.

# Machine-read passports now available

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS expects a surge in new passport applications and renewals as it starts accepting from the public applications for the new machine-readable passports (MRPs).

"Starting tomorrow, all applications, both first-timers and renewals, will be for MRPs," said Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Ironsage Lacosatito-Jr. yesterday.

The MRPs were originally made available in July only to public officials, senior citizens, migrant workers and their dependents.

MRPs, tamper-proof because of its encoded biometrics security images, will be available at the DFA head office and at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Lacosatito said.

By next month, he said, the DFA would bring the MRP technology to its 11 regional consular service offices across the country and eventually to its foreign service posts around the world.

### More globally at par

"This is a passport that complies with international standards. This is the way to go. The MRPs are better secured and more globally at par," Lacosatito said.

MRPs, a requirement under the regulations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, have been widely accepted in countries around the world as the technology enables faster processing at immigration counters, easier record-keeping and immediate retrieval and checking.

The new machine passports will cost the same as the manually-read green passports at P600 for regular processing and P748 for express processing.

Lacosatito, however, said the public would have to bear with the slower processing time for the MRPs as the DFA systems and personnel were still adjusting to the new process.

### No change in terms of cost

"There will be no change in terms of cost but the process will take a little longer. If before it took three days for express and six days for regular processing, now it will take seven days for express and 14 for regular processing," Lacosatito said.

He assured the public the number of processing days would eventually be reduced.

The DFA decided to open MRP applications to the public after it acquired enough booklets from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which supplies the upgraded passports.

It earlier issued around 135,000 MRPs to senior citizens, migrant workers and government employees who were given first crack at the new passports.

The MRP project is an interim measure. The country will eventually shift to fully electronic passports, which are embedded chips to store the passport bearer's data.

Jerry Quicoy-Casabuena


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## THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, September 17, 2007
24th Week in Ordinary Time
Robert Bellarmine

1st Reading: 1 Tim 2:1-8
Gospel: Luke 7:1-10

When Jesus had finished teaching to the people he went to Capernaum.

There was a captain whose servant was very sick and near to death, a man very dear to him. He, when he heard about Jesus, he sent some elders of the town to persuade him to come and save his servant's life. The elders came to Jesus and begged him earnestly, saying, "He deserves this of you, for he loves our people and even built a synagogue for us."

Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the captain sent friends to give this message, "Sir, do not trouble yourself for I am not worthy to welcome you under my roof. You see I didn't approach you myself. Just give the order and my servant will be healed. For I myself, a junior officer, give orders to my soldiers and I say to this one: 'Go,' and he goes; and to the other: 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant 'Do this,' and he does it."

On hearing these words, Jesus was filled with admiration. He turned and said to the people with him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." The people sent by the captain went back to his house; there they found that the servant was well.

Commentary

We are to pray for those in authority so that we can live our lives undisturbed. But we must remember that God is my and their God; he wants all people to come to the truth. We have to speak the truth to all (including or especially those in authority), and if we must, we must give our lives as reasons for the many. We serve for eternity, without reward. What does this all mean/demand/call us to/or do?

Jesus deals the servant of a centurion. He was part of the occupying force, but respected of the people and their accepted religion. The servant also was still his subject, for he knows what it is like to be under authority and he recognizes Jesus' power to arrange this. Matt 8—arranges from death. And Jesus praises his faith. He obeys authority down low! And do we keep the authority of our motive (sum to perspective)—that it is nothing in comparison to the authority of God and must be challenged (shattered) when it stands in opposition to God's authority?

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# ARMM students score lowest in national test

By Jerry E. Esplanada

A NUMBER OF PUBLIC schools in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) were among the poorest performers in the National Achievement Test (NAT) for fifth grade students conducted early this year by the Department of Education.

Of the 11 poorest performing schools, seven were located in Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Sulu, all in the ARMM, according to a DepEd report has reached the Inquirer.

Of the 29,962 public schools nationwide whose students took the test, Alog Lumbac Elementary School in Lanao del Sur registered the lowest mean percentage score (MPS) of 5.88 percent.

The average scores of Alog Lumbac's 40 examinees were 6 percent in both Science and Makata 10Mengatapos (Assessment at Schools), or 1 percent in Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies), 10 percent in Math, 10.75 percent in English, and 14.29 percent in Filipino.

## Lowest performing schools

Alog Lumpac belongs to what the DepEd calls Cluster 1 schools, or those with only 20 to 50 examinees.

The other lowest performing schools included the Pasonot and Imbaladingal elementary schools, also in Lanao del Sur, with MPS of 23.70 percent and 24.26 percent, respectively.

Others were Lupa and Datu Dakna Bahjin, both in Sulu (25.14 and 27.94 percent). Bulalakaw in Lanao del Sur (27.39 percent) and Sitio Ampuan in Maguindanao (29.61 percent).

Also among the below-average performing schools were Alawi in Bulanza (25.83 percent), Mohammad in Quirino (25.13 percent) and Kitulon in Misamis Oriental (25.26 percent).

Scores below 50 percent place students in the low mastery level. Scores between 50 and 65 percent are in the average mastery level, while scores between 66 and 85 percent indicate the students are moving toward the mastery level.

In the ARMM, "some of the problems" common for the poor performance of schools include the unsteady peace and order situation, poverty, inadequate teacher-pupil ratio and the limited learning resources in some of the schools," said Director Sofia Bonito of the DepEd's National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC).

Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus ordered low performing schools to "immediately focus on weak subject areas as reflected by the test."

The NAT is used by the DepEd to determine the achievement levels of some 1.6 million Grade 6 students, note specific and identify those who require remedial classes during their first year of high school.

## Average mastery level

The NAT results showed that 750,420 of the students, or 49.17 percent of those who took the test, posted scores between 36 and 65 percent, placing them in the average mastery level.

A total of 653,221 students (18.72 percent) demonstrated good mastery of the lessons (66 percent and 85 percent), while 63,305 students (3.02 percent) received scores between 86 and 96 percent. Only 56 students received scores between 96 and 100 percent, showing there are mastery level.

A total of 131,751 students, or 8.18 percent, were considered to be in the low mastery level.

Girls scored a higher MPS of 51.81 percent compared to boys who scored 50.09 percent.

The NETRC also noted that students from rural schools outscored their urban counterparts with an MPS of 60.02 percent compared to 59.48 percent.

Pasadena Macapagal-Arroyo will hold a Wednesday the 26 Grade 6 students who topped the NAT.

Leading the student honorees in interviews S. Palma of Lanuza Central School in Butuan from who posted an MPS of 96.5 percent, or a raw score of 193 out of 200 items.

The top performing DepEd division under Cluster 1 (those with examinees of 10,001 and above) were Batangas, Bukidnon, Bataan, Western Samar and Cavite. Cluster 2 (5,000-10,000 examinees) Leyte, Bukidnon, Agusan del Norte, Bohol (20) and Surigao del Sur. Cluster 3 (5,000 and below) Quezon City, Davao City, Baguio City, Manila City and Cotabato City.

According to the DepEd, there was a 5.18 percent increase in the MPS this year, a rate that seem forward to target of 2 percent.

# IT cuts red tape at DPWH

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS and Highways has announced that contractors with dealings with the agency can now track their documents using modern technology.

The DPWH has set up an information technology (IT) kiosk in the lobby of its head office on Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila.

"The program is in line with the pronouncement of President Macapagal-Arroyo to cut red tape in the bureaucracy," said Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. in a statement.

"The DOTS [Document Tracking System] does not allow for the personal follow-up of papers, eliminating personal transactions as well as the 'lagay' [bribery] system," Ebdane said.

DPWH director Elizabeth Yap said the IT system accelerates or assists documents existing on plan specifications, program of work, approved budget for contract, prequalification resolution, notices of award, contract to be entered, and pre-clearances for variation order, negotiated procurement or supplemental agreement.

The contractors can also track their own direct time extensions, memorandum of agreement or understanding, payment for road right-of-way, advance payment, first, intermediate and final progress payments, and other civil work documents.

Ebdane said DPWH personnel had been directed to strictly observe the processing time for these documents.

He said erring personnel would be moved out for corresponding sanctions. -Margarette C. Imson


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# Peruvians using RP to get to Canada illegally deported

By Marghee C. Ortiz

FOUR PERUVIAN NATIONALS HAVE BEEN deported for attempting to use the Philippines as a jump-off point to enter Canada illegally.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said in a statement he had also ordered the Peruvians placed on the immigration blacklist to prevent their reentry into the country.

Libanan identified the four as Wilson Cerdin Mendonzarte Jun Barredenne, 43; Maria Mollet Torres Pockels, 40; Ana Maria Mendonzarte San Bartolome, 58, and Omar Luciano Machai Navarrete, 28.

He said they were arrested at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Media last week.

The four had been refused entry into Taiwan and were sent back to Manila after they were caught using fake Mexican and Spanish passports, Libanan said.

"There was no doubt these passengers were involved in an elaborate human trafficking operation. But until Manila or their transit point," he said.

According to Commissioner Libanan, acquisition establishment and monitoring group chief at Naia, the Peruvian left NAIA Manila for Taipei on Sept. 9 using fake passports and intending to make their way to Vancouver, Canada.

Francis said the four would have eventually crossed over into the United States from Canada.

He said the Peruvians schemed how they can go into the country to transit again at the airport. They said they had bought their spurious passports for $1,800 from a man they identified only as Roberto in Malaysia.

Records showed the Peruvians first arrived at Naia on Aug. 14 from Kuala Lumpur.

Last Tuesday, they were deported to their country based on evaluation reports submitted from the Bureau of Immigration at Naia, Francis said.


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# Senate millionaires club: Villar is richest

From page A1

per cent of the combined net worth of P1.594 billion of all 23 senators.

His latest net worth is nearly three times the P550 million he declared in 2000, his first year as a senator.

Trillanes, the jailed leader of the Magdalo group who[ly] launched a coup in 2003, reported a net worth of P33.3 million, placing him last on the list of all 23 millionaire senators.

Among the new senators, only Juan Miguel Zubiri joined the 10-with-[a]-million senators. Zubiri was ninth with a net worth of P43.3 million.

VILLAR: P611.49

MADRIGAL: P144.99

ROXAS: P140.39

REVILLA: P107.9

ENRILE: P989

### More than P100 million

Two scions of old-rich families led famed Villar—Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II with P140.3 million.

Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. came in fourth with P107 million.

Villar, Madrigal, Roxas and Revilla are the four senators with a net worth of more than P100 million each.

Rounding out the Top 10 are Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile (P98 million); Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. (P97 million); Sen. Pia Cayetano (P76.2 million); Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago (P76 million) and Sen. Loren Legarda (P41.4 million).

### Modest

Compared to Zubiri, the other neophyte senators have "modest" wealth—Alan Peter Cayetano (P16 million), Bongbong Marcos III (P13.3 million) and Francis Joseph Escudero (P7.4 million).

The rest of the senators and their net worth were Edgardo Angara (P41 million), Rodolfo Biazon, (P27.4 million), Panfilo Lacson (P20.8 million) and Richard Gordon (P15.6 million).

Francis Pangilinan (P11.4 million), Gregorio Honasan (P11 million), John Lapid (P11.1 million), Juhar Antayo (P1.2 million) and Ingrdino Sotto[ro] Jr. (P3.3 million).

### Misleading

The assets declared by the senators does not reflect the current market values of their properties, especially houses and land.

A house and lot in Quezon City, Pilipas to Makati, for instance, which was acquired in the 1960s, may be worth tens of millions of pesos today.

But its worth as reflected in a SALN would be much less. This is because a senator, or any public official for that matter, can use the acquisition cost of the property in declaring its value.

# MILF offers to pull out forces in Basilan, Sulu

From page A1

less elements they are after."

The 12,000-strong MILF has been waging a decades-old rebellion for an independent Islamic state in the southern Philippines.

### Lack of coordination

In 2003, the MILF signed a truce with the government, but a lack of coordination between ground forces on both sides has often led to bloody encounters.

In July, renegade MILF guerrillas backed by the Abu Sayyaf ambushed a military convoy, killing 14 soldiers—10 of whom were beheaded. That incident sparked outrage and pushed President Macapagal-Arroyo to launch a massive offensive.

The MILF vowed up to the attack, but said its fighters had followed rules of combat and did not mutilate the bodies.

The military later said the offender was aimed at the Abu Sayyaf, a small gang of self-styled bandits and kidnappers on the US government's list of foreign terrorist organizations.

### Peace talks

Government negotiators have said peace talks under the auspices of Malaysia will resume with the MILF chief search in connection with Ramadan, the Islamic fasting season, or shortly after.

Nine days before government forces launched military operations against the Abu Sayyaf in Tipo-Tipo town on Basilan on Aug. 28, MILF forces had already repositioned themselves to avoid encounters.

Von Al Haq, chair of the MILF's Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, said the decision to reposition MILF guerrillas was reached between himself and his government counterpart, Sen. Edgardo Garcia.

Al Haq said the government chief negotiator, retired Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, and MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal, who both recommended the arrangement to conserve the gains of the peace process, approved the plan.

### Maguindanao

In August 2005, MILF rebels vacated their two camps, Buliok and Omar Ibn Khattab, in Cotabato City and Talayan town in Maguindanao to give way to government troops who were running after Abu Sayyaf and suspected Jemaah Islamiyah militants holed up there.

After the military operations, the rebels were allowed to return to their camps.

*With reports from AFP and Nico Alconaba, Inquirer Mindanao*

# Prosecutor in Marcos case axed

By Leila B. Salaverria

SAYING THAT SHE HAD SHOWN HER lack of trustworthiness, the Court of Appeals has upheld the Ombudsman's ruling dismissing a special prosecutor from the service for mishandling two criminal cases filed in 1991 against former first lady Imelda Marcos and several others which the government eventually lost.

The appellate court said special prosecution officer II Evelyn Lucero failed to oppose Marcos' demurrer to evidence in her malversation cases, which was eventually granted and led to the eventual dismissal of the cases.

A demurrer to evidence is a claim that the prosecution's evidence against the accused is insufficient.

With the dismissal of the cases, the Ombudsman found Lucero guilty of grave neglect of duty and ordered her dismissed from the service in June 2004.

Lucero filed a motion for reconsideration, but this was denied.

### Moral quality

She then challenged the decision in the Court of Appeals.

But the court refused to accept Lucero's excuse that she was not required to challenge the demurrer to evidence.

"Certainly, for petitioner to feign handicap by inadequate skill, there is impossible for a scanty reply that there is no rule requiring all prosecutors to file at all times a comment or opposition to a demurrer to evidence or to give away petitioner's lack of the requisite trustworthiness and acuteness of mind and that none which all officers serving under the Office of the Ombudsman must possess at all times. It is a rudimentary quality of integrity of being morally certain 'where-ends' they are to," the court said in its Aug. 24 decision.

The court added that moral quality takes great significance, especially in the Marcos cases, which the Supreme Court had described as having "overriding considerations of national interest and national survival."

The appellate court also said the failure to oppose the demurrer to evidence was tantamount to saying that Lucero agreed with Marcos' motion and was endorsing the dismissal of the "purported" criminal cases due to lack of evidence.

Lucero was assigned to prosecute the malversation cases against Marcos who was charged in her former capacity as minister of human settlements, and six other officials namely Jose Rentoy, Gilbert Teodoro and Rafael Ileto.

### Selling out

"Oddly, petitioner did not have enough conviction in the cause that she was supposed to have vigorously prosecuted in the name of the state, that at the second's declaration that the case against them was weak, petitioner grabbed such first copy of vanity to express her full agreement, without even putting on a semblance of a fight," the appellate court said.

It also noted the comment of the Ombudsman in Lucero's petition, that it was her ex-prosecutor who was "selling out, conniving with and walking to the inside of the former first lady," and that she would have been better off working for Marcos.

The administrative case against Lucero was filed by the fact-finding and intelligence bureau in the Office of the Ombudsman.

While the complaint was being decided, Lucero was placed under preventive suspension.


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# OPINION

## Legal insanity

THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO VIEW THE ESTRADA verdict as a half-empty glass of *chateau vanter* are not doing the country any favors. Yes, other plunderers continue to roam the land. Yes, Mr. an Marcos junior senator Imelda Marcos, other public officials continue to take in enormous amounts of commissions from betting, and plunder cases can be filed against them. [Would you like to start the ball rolling?] And yes, certain scandals since Joseph Estrada fled Malacañang call for the most severe legal accounting.

**EDITORIAL**

But do these autonomous facts diminish Estrada's guilt one iota?

Lawyers who think so are indulging a form of legal insanity. They taint the legal process with innuendo or outright contempt, unmindful of or uncaring about their impact on the rule of law itself. What do they want to do, run themselves out of a job?

As we have said time and again, both the Arroyo administration and the Estrada camp have sought to politicize the plunder trial. But the conduct of the Sandiganbayan justices themselves and their measured decision prove that the anti-graft court's Special Division confined itself to the facts and the law of the case at hand.

To be sure, the stature of the principal defendant was not lost on the justices; the decision unfailingly refers to him as "Erap, Estrada," apparently a new honorific. And as we saw on live television, the division's three justices were ready to allow Estrada's continued detention, pending final conviction, in his Tanay, Rizal rest house even before his defense counsel raised the possibility (or even after Estrada lawyer Rene Saguisag pandered to the off-site gallery by declaring, sadly, that his client did not want special treatment). But we do not believe the rule of law suffered when the former president was accorded these minor courtesies.

It needs to be stressed: the court's independence, as evidenced in its decision, is triumph enough. Its well-reasoned decision on the plunder case, however, is a true legal landmark.

Those who insist that Estrada's guilt is contingent on the size, perceived or real, of the Arroyo administration are preaching a false and cynical faith. Not because these sins do not exist; they do, and the administration's continuing refusal to testify in Congress about various scandals is the surest proof that it has something to hide. But because those who insist are attacking the very rule of law they claim to defend.

To use an unsavory but necessary analogy: Do we stop ourselves from pursuing a case against a rapist, because other rapists have gone scot-free or because other rapes have not been reported? This is not legal realism, or even the realpolitik of law; this is "moralhaz-wotdhez" definitions, a cynic's formula for anarchy.

Other plunderers roam the land? Then let's throw the book at them too. The good thing is, now we can apply the ritual luncons learned from the Estrada plunder trial.

Perhaps first on the list: Insofar private lawyers in the perpetration and the prosecution. Private law firms can bring otherwise unavailable financial resources and litigation expertise to bear on the case, complementing the work of government prosecutors.

Support government lawyers to the hilt, not least in the matter of which state witnesses to use (necessarily a decision with political considerations). Over-prove the charges, not only through the use of inconvertible documentary evidence but also through redundant corroborative testimony. And while landing a Chavit Singson is both chanterelle but necessary, build the real case with the help of a Clarissa Ocampo—upstanding witnesses with unimpeachable credibility.

It's tough work—and therefore all the more reason to praise the government prosecutors led by Dennis Villa-Ignacio (and spear-headed more upon a time by then Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo). Tough and—if you listen to the snide Saguisag—fundamentally thankless. Estrada's lawyers believe they had a monopoly not only on the truth of the case but even on virtuosity of conviction. It is our duty to disabuse them of their final illusions.

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## How can you implement a lost contract?

ONE "FOXY" DE VENECIA IS REMEMBERED TO many inside of his many meetings with Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos regarding his country's proposal to set up a nationalism gone broadband network for the Philippine government. But he forgot one very important thing: to read the provisions of the text given him.

One of its provisions prohibits relatives of the president, vice president, senate president and speaker from getting involved in government contracts. (Or so the text and nomenclature of Speaker Jose de Venecia. Clearly, he is one of those included in the prohibition. The law spells out the top officials of the land... president, vice president, senate president, speaker—whose relatives are barred from investing in government contracts. The reason is obvious: these officials have so much influence on government that the mere presence mention of their names cannot leave level officials to lose their objectivity. (Or JD was doing us illegal act following up his company's proposal deal with the government.

He may be telling the truth when the illegal GSI million-dollar scandal allegedly by Abalos on him, in exchange for withdrawing the proposal of his company, Amsterdam Holdings Inc. But to down too outright the fact that his act of following up his company's proposal is also illegal.

* * *

As for Abalos, it does not help his case one iota that he refuses to speak up to defend himself beyond saying he "would talk only at the proper forum"—a cliché echoed by JDV. If himself who said he would reveal only at the proper forum the identity of the "former state" brought in by Abalos to share him business with Amsterdam Holdings. The proper forum express as an indication of guilt. They think that the least person concerned wants to talk is his lawyers first and cover all angles before speaking his mouth. A wise legal review but, unfortunately, some lack of it in the case of those who are screaming and hawking and the generally of lack of forthrightness as a sign of guilt.

Abalos used to be quick at uncovering operations almost other things, so it is quite a

**AS I SEE IT**

*Neal H. Cruz*

change when he came up on the NBN deal and the alleged bribery attempt.

* * *

And what is the involvement of President Macapagal's former herself in the broadband deal which is, according to some estimates, overpriced by as much as 130 percent? The President went out of her way to fly all the way to China just to witness the signing of the ZTE contract by Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza and his Chinese counterpart—the same contract that was allegedly stolen more after it was signed. And even after the Supreme Court had issued a TRO (temporary restraining order) against implementing the contract, DBM issued an official statement that the Philippines "is duty-bound" to honor international contracts such as the NBN deal. Clearly, she was trying to influence the justices who were against the deal to "execute" it even when the 20-day TRO expires. Why is this NBN deal so important to her that she had to junk proper decorum to push it, in spite of the fact that there is a very big question mark hanging over it?

For the first time, how can you implement a contract that is non-existent? There is no existing copy of the contract, as far as the Philippine government is concerned, yet the administration insists we go ahead with implementing the contract. Where is the contract? Every lawyer, at least, knows that for each party involved in producing a copy of the contract. A contract has at least two copies, one for each party. If the Philippine government's copy was "stolen," what about the Chinese copy? It wouldn't be difficult for the Philippines to ask for a photocopy, if only to give the people a general idea of its terms.

And a counter usually has several desks before it is signed. So the "stolen" copy may be so amended from the drafts, the obviously, no body wants the contract such by "middle men." Why? When is an abbreviation or shorthand after the name of a person in the header and signed is an abbreviation it would not be light of day?

But GMA forgot all of these and instead has the courtesy to push the contract in spite of the Supreme Court's statutory opinion.

* * *

This may shock Quezon City Vice Mayor Herbert "Bistek" Bautista, but fans of former presidential chief of staff and seasoned salt wannabe Michael Defensor are urging the latter to mediate the problems to be vacated by Mayor Sonny Belmonte who is on his third and final term. If Defensor decides to throw his hat into the ring, he would make a strong candidate.

People power idol Bautista as a show in for the mayoralty in 2010, but that is only because no candidate of Defensor's caliber has surfaced yet. Bautista has not been involved in any controversy yet, but he has not been without an Defensor's high-apparent administration as vice mayor for several terms, he has been associated with the mayor's inclination preferences.

Quezon City boasts of having the fastest bank account transactions range from P1 billion to P6 billion) among all cities in the Philippines. What is all that money doing by the city's taxpayers? Nothing.

Defensor, on the other hand, is an action man. He does things publicly. With him as mayor—and with his experience as housing czar—he may be the one to rid Quezon City of its monstrous image as the number capital of the Philippines, and to finally do justice to Quezon City... the Congressional avenue which remains unfinished after 18 years. The completion of Congressional Avenue has been stalled because the Quezon City government has not yet paid for the rights of way that it always promised when the road cannot Congressional Avenue to Visayas Avenue. With Defensor at its helm, Quezon City may finally become the pride and real capital of the Philippines.

## We can do it

**THERE'S THE RUB**

*Conrado de Quiros*

ARE U AFRAID ME LAST NIGHT WHY THE public took the Erap verdict passively, or any or any case to which to protest it. The answers are too hard to fathom.

One has to say in the cases that Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is lucky. It's not just that she has an incredible talent to self-perpetuate, it's that her calculations are so unerringly self-interested. The judgment on Erap has Wednesday is a classic example. The Erap camp was so busy fighting the legal war...his advisers were all looking hungrily and eager to see the sword with their legal brilliance—they never saw that the real war lay elsewhere.

There was, first of all, the image war. Its have to give it to Malacañang's spin doctors; they know their job. Clearly they've learned their lessons from the past. Chief of Staff Angelo Reyes was here a highly emotionally charged situation, you now see, in court, the emotional charge. When did in the Erap camp during the opening of the second conviction was the symbolic response to the Erap supporters—no matter in the case—it's over tragedy—and the praising of Erap's allies in the Senate—literally also in Senate Drew dancing like Salome. And what nearly did Ichik in some months after she took power made Erap look like a martyr. Which is no mean thing in a public, which does not like descamisados to invade the Edsa Shrine.

Malacañang controlled the image but meticulously, creating the emotional context of the verdict completely. And it is a testament to the power of the Erap mystique that it never sure is working. In addition to the house we can never now to possess the Sandiganbayan under pervasive media from covering the screening—only specified camera was allowed in. It was not to media to fight the gang, and they managed to win only small concessions. Media's natural instinct is to look for "human interest," the more poignant, the better. There was none of it last Wednesday.

There was to be no human drama of Erap showing how his men at hearing his face in his hands. There were no evasion shots of his kin and friends weeping and pleading their cases. There were only three Saguisag and Jose Flaminiano presenting on certain points of law. Blood does not bathe the right, until around, of Saguisag and Flaminiano presenting on certain points of law—other than in their direction.

Just as well, not the slightest hint of gloating from the enemy GMA appeared on a light that was not. Her handlers are going with a low-profile, winning the message, "business as usual." She even cancelled an afternoon talk, I suspect on the advice of her spin doctors who figured that the less the show attention to herself that day the better it.

Quite apart from the image war, the Erap camp lost the political war. I still say of NBC-Tel Wednesday that Angelo sure was not unlike that of Saddam Hussein. Everybody knew Saddam was a bastard, but few were the supporters of the triumph of justice the United States advertised it to be. The reason for it was simple. Everyone knew that there was an overwhelmed bastard, who was the person who invaded his country. It was the United States. Everyone, it was that foreign PI. Bush was pathetic Saddam's task was never to draw attention to himself; it was to draw attention to the right of the court to try him. It was not to make for non-existence, it was to show that the court had a moral mission in sentencing him, which was to legitimize the invasion of Iraq. That task didn't serve him from the gallows, for it put the matter around the media of his enemies was probably not entirely figuratively.

Erap's strategist not was not his innocence, it was GMA's guilt—which was the biggest one. He had such should not have been in those positions to

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# Guardians of opacity

I LIKE THE WORD OPAQUE. IT IS SUCH A RICH word. It primarily means impervious to light so that images cannot be seen through it. It means dull and without luster. It can also mean obscure and unintelligible in meaning or impenetrable to a specified kind of light. Opacity is the property of a material, such as photographic film, to stop light.

The words opaque and opacity aptly describe the current administration's attitude toward information and cost issues in government. Never mind the talk about transparency and transparency commissions. Talk is cheap. It can be breached with fingers crossed.

The government's presidential votes law just concluded the first phase of its effort to gain closer former President Joseph Estrada. Even while the decision of the Sandiganbayan has not yet become final, a team has already been formed, we are told, to study the provisions of millions of pesos worth of property under sequestration in the verdict.

The energy being poured into grazing results against Estrada is admirable. Would that similar zeal and perseverance and energy were also poured into unraveling the truth behind allegations of irregularities and graft in government transactions by the very guardians of government. Sadly, this is not happening. We see government bureaucracy being internal in an opposite direction. Its effort is spared to maximize opacity.

The Supreme Court recently affirms a determination by congress and defend the Constitution, to ensure its laws, to do justice to every man, and to conserve and to be servant of the nation. Taking the oath, to use Thomas More's figure, is like putting water in cupped hands. To cup the hands and call it that. The oath becomes meaningless.

You can limit the 1987 Constitution for being overly verbose. But obviously does not do the duty.

**SOUNDING BOARD**

*Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.*

ago that infidelity inflicts. Call it grand verbosity but the meaning is clear. "The State shall maintain honesty and integrity in the public service and take positive and effective measures against graft and corruption," subject to reasonable conditions prescribed by law, the State adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest."

But that is too all. The Commission also commands. "The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law."

What have we been getting instead? Obscurantism and obfuscation. Opacity instead of transparency.

There exist in the conspiracy among bureaucrats the legislative and executive departments to maximize opacity and to protect one another from transparency. It was painfully clear during the height of the first attempts to force out the truth involved in the "Garci" tapes scandal. The matter never became clarified and unfortunately never will.

There's one hint that Malacañan is going to pursue the Subic case, namely Balanon belongs to the inner circle and had to be protected—not so much for himself perhaps as for those who have profited from his profligacy.

The recurring inducements are the promulgation of Executive Order 464. It was addressed to officials of executive branch. "ENSURING OBSERVANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF SEPARATION OF POWERS, ADHERENCE TO FUNDAMENTAL EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE AND RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS APPEARING IN CONGRESS' INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES." But in reality it was a gigantic dose who serves as a position-colored light to help persons in the dark corners of government, it is to hide that way.

It is because body cannot legislate wisely or effectively in the absence of information respecting the conditions which the legislation is intended to affect or change; and where the legislative body exercises itself possesses the requisite information—which is not infrequently the case—recourse must be had to others who do possess it." This spoke Eisenhower in the 1958 Senate case.

The doctrine has not changed. But a solidarity happens under the unbearing threat of EO 464, and EO 464 is again being invoked against the senate's efforts to find the truth behind the ZTE controversy. True, we must honor contracts. But where is the contract, and is it honest? Did not the Supreme Court invalidate the Piatco contract? How easily do we forget?

Indeed the Supreme Court did say despite EO 464 unconstitutional in its entirety. The Supreme Court did not say that "executive privilege" has unrestricted reach. There has proper place but is that is the exception to the rule. The general rule still is transparency and "a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest." Only enforcing this important policy is a broad range of executive privilege endanger democracy itself.

# A word of caution about medical tests

TEN YEARS AGO, I UNDERWENT A GERIATRIC/MEDICINE rotation at St. Luke's Medical Center. It all started a year earlier when the first indication of trouble hit me like a cold wind blowing on a hot summer day. It was an uncomfortable feeling that I attempted to still in barrages of the aging process. Twenty and twenty-one during a year in Boston and my entire working behind schedule, so I had to make a 200-meter dash to the bus station. Feeling down, I felt a strange discomfort around my chest and it took me a bit longer than usual to catch my breath.

When we returned home, an excessive check up was suggested—some thing that grew on second my mind. In all the years spent in a private practice

**REVEILLE**

*Ramon J. Farolan*

week environments. The results were not too good. In fact, I did not realize that I was in awful shape. My blood pressure and sugar levels were high. I had hypertension, diabetes, and indications of a prostate problem.

To make a long story short, I ended up on the operating table with three arteries blocked and needing bypass surgery. Some people referred to the procedure as a "CABG (cabbage)" operation, meaning, a necessary activity before grub. Most others retained their wheels living in simply a "bypass."

I would like to thank once again my attending physicians, Dr. Cesar "Buch" Bravo, my cardiologist, performed the angiogram, Intensivists Dutch was a classmate of my son Dr. Miguel Natalio as the ICU-College of Medicine. Dr. Jean De Castro was the cardiovascular surgeon who opened up and then closed my chest after some fine engineering work, besides Dr. Jose Bautista, a pulmonologist, took me through breathing exercises in preparation for the discomfort into techniques after surgery. All these are among the best in their respective fields and she would they did gave me another 10 years and more of service and productive life. Incidentally, a number of my close friends have suggested that I should write a book about my favorable treatment by local physicians. (Indeed it is a procedure during the removal of plaque and other impurities in our blood by means of a threaded or a laser light. My friends convey to the process.

Today, while my blood pressure remains stable and my prostate seems to be behaving rather, the concern of my doctors. Diabetes may not be life threatening, but the disease, if left unattended, would lead to complications like renal failure and kidney failure. This may result in the need for dialysis or even a kidney transplant.

But the point there years I have been undergoing annual tests for my ailment. The medical with a mind attempts job. For my patients, it is a procedure for obtaining glucose of the kidney by use of radioisotopes injected into my body intravenously. The results are measured in terms of glomerular filtration Rate (GFR) equivalent to 98/min.

When I realize that this is Greek for most of us. Let me just say that for as long as your GFR is above 50, your kidneys continue to function. Between 20 and 50, it would be advisable to consult closely with a nephrologist (kidney specialist). Below 20, you become a candidate for dialysis. A considerations procedure that involves removing waste products and excess water from the body by artificial means. This requires time, patience, and nerves heavy medical costs.

My doctors will forgive me for overemphasizing the whole issue. There are, of course, other factors that have to be taken into account if we are to arrive at an accurate picture of the problem.

In 2005, my GFR was 71.8. In 2006, it was 60.6 to 64.7, a very deterioration which was cause for concern. In August 2007, my GFR decreased further to 57.7 and for the first time my nephrologist Dr. Immaculada F. Silvestre of Medical City discussed the dreaded term "D" for dialysis. However she had ordered the previous tests a few months ago—my creatinine levels—was excited when we should have been eliminated considering the GFR reading.

I decided to have a second opinion and consulted with Dr. Enrique Dee, the executive director of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute in Quezon City. Comparing the results of my GFR tests with those of my nephrologist, he too also puzzled by the same discrepancy noted by Dr. Dee.

Dr. Dee decided to get in touch with Dr. Angel De Guzman, chief of Marlene Medicine at the Kidney Institute and the National Capital Medical Center, who also happens to be my friend. They both agreed that a re-testing should be done because of certain conditions which I did not quite understand at that time.

The re-testing indicated that my GFR equivalent was 74.8, even higher than the 2006 reading. The medical reason advanced for the low figure was self-explained knowing of BMI 25 as evidenced by the protuberances in the stomach." Again his friends Greek to all of us. But the high figure certainly meant good news.

Now, that's a load off my chest but it doesn't mean I'm out of the woods. I still have to be careful about blood pressure—and diabetes control prohibited. This means watching my diet, taking my medications, exercising, and constantly updating with my physicians.

My point here is that we should have an open mind about medical test results. They may sometimes be incorrect, possibly leading to all kinds of complications. A second opinion or a re-test may be in order. Let us not be afraid to ask questions in this final analysis, it is our health, your well being, and ultimately your life that is at stake.

My special thanks to Dr. Enrique Dee and Dr. Angel De Guzman for their generous time and attention.

*Do you want your children or loves to speak Chinese? Do you want them to learn Mandarin as a second or third language? Do you want to prepare them to take higher level, certificate eligibility exams? Ongoing information sessions at Chinese International School Manila (CISM), a private, co-educational, K-12 international school located in Malate, New York, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City are being held to introduce parents and parents to students to the international curriculum standards of CISM. Its program integrates both Mandarin and Chinese curricula. The school is headed by Hsu Sui-cuan (Joe Hsu), a nominee of my daughter Carlotta "Bee" Bautista as International School Manila (ISM) Class of '76, along with Felicia Hong-Hsueh. See www.cismanila.org.*

# Thank you, Mother Teresa

**COMMENTARY**

*Asuncion David Maramba*

BY NOW THE WORLD KNOWS OF THE TOUCHING Teresa of Calcutta went through. Except for Jesus, Mother Teresa de Jesus was the saint in her diocese, doing it for the kind one wishes to do the things he himself wrote, it can be a travesty to compare her words which ring a poignant and powerful phraseology of the searching soul.

Mother Teresa revealed was done by ordinary human beings. Her spiritual darkness, her "dark blood might seem as of having "a temptation against faith," if in the context, out if kind might advise us to seek counsel or go to confession. If overzealous, our friend could hold on suspect as agnostic. Such were the knee-jerk reactions we made for judging others.

But because such an admission came from Teresa, a great, de facto saint even in her lifetime, we must bow, for instance, to against from such judgments. Still it is possible that some birds and some of the people in the world are unaware of how saw Teresa be remembered. She doubted the existence of God." In fact, "the jaws of the mirror of her soul outrageously dropped." Thankfully, most of us don't look at it that way. So was that "the hope has extended to "the silence of God." Even as it was, its feelings can also be marred and, hard-wired in the "transcendental, yet attended by moments of atonement.

Thank you for dispelling the notion that the lives of saints are monotonous and light, a path of holding and always inspirational. Indeed, from your words, we learn that "The thing has this kind of hagiography draped are views of holy lives and holiness, making us expect more mundane than is really there, so sleeping Rama that is, in "Jesus, you have been Bush and blood, as shall we say blood, sweat and tears. You are real.

Finally there is one matter for which I thank Mother Teresa. I am now not speaking of mere physical doubt on the veracity existence of God. I am speaking of a matter severely grave. You have found—no doubt, but what TS. Eliot, the modern poet gave of our time, called "disturbing the universe."

I refer to the need to ask questions about traditional Church matters but are very much with us in the present day. In the case since Vatican II, we solidly dust with the understanding given to Teresa's deepest doubts, the Church may now be free to carry on the spirit of inquiry and to move kind to those who would seek clarification on Church positions, values, teachings, policies. I personally hope for more open climate of discussion or dialogue, doors of the Church's and some secret well-known positions for manipulating, silencing or reprimanding.

Although I receive more hate mail than eulogized or down grooms, and considering how unfaithful I must, I have been asked whether I have permission to write what I do or to "cower with the mantle of charity" the condescending of the Church. I have been supposed to be a Protestant, or a heretic, because apparently recommended" for suggesting, some years ago, that there is salvation outside the Church.

Why, for example, can't the faithful openly ask why the hierarchy continues to wear royal vestments and jewelry associated with royal ceremonies and titles such as "prince" of the Church, and living in the palaces? Trying to answer this could lead to lively discussion and a unity of the monarchic Church, wisdom, dignity, authority, and the very promise the Church must take in its "natural preferential option for the poor.

Instead as ago, slavery was moral, interest on money was was immoral, and a Pope expressed alarm at "the insane notion that universal free entry of competent should be proscribed and fought for." If that can't seamlessly thought these church positions were all wrong, he was right. Sins slavery is immoral, interest is moral and the primacy of conscience is irrevocable.

What Jesus said to the Pharisees? Theologians, seminars, scholars must have studied, discussed, dissected, then arrived at "new" judgments and conclusions after having in consultation of history, discoveries of science, and an ever-growing human consciousness.

Did Teresa not also have doubts on the fullness of human dignity change? Yes at all. Our thanksgiving perceptions and knowledge now things not seen or known before. That is where to publish and even anachronly to stop "infallibles" on matters that are not yet defined.

Teresa wrote When the exact moment Divine gifts and rich ends to unconsciously discovered, to pass another round of discussion on population management. That will be unstoppable. The age of Medieval has is finished.

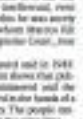
When Cardinal Bernard Jansen Pope, 19 prominent American Catholics were asked, "What should the next Pope do?" One said "return to the timeless the 100 Catholics . . . once visited over the Church's major orders . . . like Hans Kung, Edward Schillebeeckx, Leonardo Boff, and the three bishops" and listed to each other.

Thank you Mother Teresa, for the doubt you revealed. Maybe the Church will now be kinder to those who only "thirsts."

*Asuncion David Maramba is a retired professor, book editor and occasional journalist. Comments to marda_phil@yahoo.com, fax 8219658*

# Marcos in retrospect (1)

**THE LONG VIEW**



*Manuel L. Quezon III*

YOU'D HAVE TO BE OVER 40 YEARS OLD, MAYBE closer to 50, to remember a time when Ferdinand Marcos wasn't the president. Yes, I'm sure there was in 1965 (my year for honorary presidents), you would have been 21 years old when he finally left the Palace—think of those 21 years of your realization upon leaving to government propaganda telling you he was the greatest Filipino ever. If you were born when Marcos died, you may now be 20 years old—much of your encounter upon being told that Marcos was the worst Filipino, ever. Both you and your parents have grown up to the shadow of one man and his wife.

Ferdinand Marcos' shadow is the tallest human in existence, he didn't mean—the campaign appearance of its tallest people would have involved wearing "Lincoln" that he was not much more of a resistance than many men of his generation and maybe more than most men of his generation. But he was tall, but still, and athletic for most of his life: a marksman, tennis, scored with a photographic memory. Surely we can agree he was a man of talents, we conclude to disagree whether he used those talents for anything larger than his own ambitions.

The dull features of his life, the one we hope and pause for school reports, doesn't factor us to try to make sense of his life. Perhaps the most perspective effort on this that I've encountered was Raymond Bonner's 1987 book, now out of print for decades, often quarrelsome book titled "Fraudulent Marcos and the Philippine Political Culture."

The life of Marcos can be divided, said Bonner, into phases. Those phases intersected chapters in the nation's development, and those of the cultures in which leaders and the helicopters.

Phase One was Marcos the law student who practiced law. While standing trial for the murder of his father's political opponent, Julio Nalundasan, Marcos became the bar exam topnotcher. Marcos' intellectual capacities could not be measured, but grades were so high, the passers were convinced to be cheated.

He continued the pattern he had passed, from elementary, he faced some of the answers again, when his conviction for murder reached the Supreme Court on appeal. He won his appeal on Sept. 25, 1940, a date he would memorialize 25 years later.

Phase Two is also the most mysterious: Death March survivor Marcos, the guerrilla Marcos. How much of it is demonstrated by his medals, was true? At least part of it. Gunther Peterson takes right after the one shamed Marcos with every impression of his medals on his chest, a Distinguished Service Cross, a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Any were as with those indispensable awards would be created and a hero—except that Marcos wanted to be the most awarded warrior, and some of his claims would become the butt of jokes for decades.

This phase, by the or suggest, remains a period often overlooked in the debate over his war record. That period is Marcos' intellectual, even philosophical development. In this he was acutely influenced by a statesman to whom Marcos felt he could be compared by the Supreme Court...Jose Laurel.

Here's something President Laurel said in 1941: "The whole history of government shows that public affairs would be better administered and the welfare of the people more generally served if honest and intelligent statesmen. The people are not by positions and given the same time ... [to the other hand, a good and effective government, a benevolent government, may exist and continue indefinitely to function with admirable harmony, when its administrators are not intellectual mediocrities are accused of the same."

Laurel also said that there were four leading sources of our national unity: the Flag, the Constitution, the National Anthem, and the Presidency. In this he would try to leave his mark on all four: he changed the color of the flag, he established a modern arrangement of the anthem during our independence day; he altered single-handedly several constitutions, and he took his office, and that himself, the Alpha and Omega of our government and society.

The third phase was Marcos the elected politician: an interregnum from 1949 to 1959, first in the Liberal administrations, given his first big break as a presidential assistant by President Roxas, then supported in his candidacy by his fellow Ilocano Congressman Elizalde, and in opposition to the Nacionalista party. Marcos the senator from 1959 to 1965, including being senate president from 1963, and position in watching after President Diosdado Macapagal, provided to support him in 1965. Marcos the up-and-coming politician, with strong support for his governorship in the 1st Cadet Corps, and the gun-fellas, the financiers and the Ilocanos core.

The fourth phase was the President Marcos of 1965-86, and the incumbent President who unfortunately has inherited the mantle. Marcos' landslide victory in 1965 was followed by re-election from 1969 to 1972 on all fronts. This was a time of media upheaval, when our deeply divided society used as figure a way forward.

In Leon Ma. Guerrero, in his justification of martial law, "Today Begin Yesterday" wrote, "The experiment in the Philippines ... had been of parties that were not parties but unprincipled coalitions of the rich, the powerful, and the unscrupulous, of elections that were essentially meaningless exercises in fraud, coercion, bribery and downright violence, of politicians who represented no one but themselves. The people's capacity for self-government had been stopped in a political dissolution they had not bonded to work or reward, and their capacity for indignation and generosity, sacrifice and service to the country left to rot in poverty."

The solution, to Marcos' mind, was martial law. This was the fifth phase: the supposedly reformist Marcos, the one who wrote "Today's Revolution: Democracy."

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

# Pro-lawbreakers, anti-law enforcers

I WAS WALKING DOWN THE STREET AND saw a Land Cruiser park in front of a "Mcdonald's" sign, right in front of a yellow-clad traffic officer. When I asked him why he did not stop the boys from parking, he looked at me repeatedly and said the boss would not pay attention with him.

I rode a bus and saw a couple of passengers standing. I asked the conductor as well those not to smoke in a public vehicle. Obviously irritated, the conductor looked at me and said those were would-be pa-angry-with-him-if-he-did.

A passenger told the jeepney driver to stop. A policeman came over and asked the driver why he stopped in a clearly marked prohibited zone. The driver told the policeman that if he didn't, the passenger would pa-angry with him.

I notice that we are afraid of people who clearly break the law but get irritated with people who are trying to enforce the law.

It's sad to think that we actually allow people to pa-arrow-talk breaking the law. I do not know who to pay more, the conductor for his unplanned admonition, the passenger for his unfelt heroism, or me for having to endure all this. As I stared away from the traffic officer, he hastily called the attention of a driver for parking his vehicle in front of a "No Parking" sign. I asked the officer was a "common occurrence" I know.

Well, we allow some people to get away with breaking the law.

—BELLE BOZEL
(bozelart@gmail.com)

## Apec and GBPC not technical partners

I AM WRITING IN REFERENCE to the news item "Boracay plans to use its fleets," (December, 9/12/07).

We would like to clarify that Asia Pacific Energy Corporation (Apec) is not the technical partner of Global Business Power Corporation (GBPC). Apec is the developer power plant of Pantoc Heavy Industries Corporation (PHIC) in the Philippines. GBPC has partnered with PHIC for the technical development of the expansion project for Pantoc Power Corporation.

—ABRAHAM SANCHEZ-MONTERO,
compliance/commercial officer,
Global Business
Power Corporation,
6/F Tower Saturday Road,
Ayala Avenue cor.
Rv dela Costa Street,
Makati City

## Why Meralco was returned to Lopezes

REAL CRUE HAS REALIGNED! Mr Sen. Joker Arroyo owes it a return of our favorite, (December, 9/18/07 and 9/19/07).

Great rumor-mon night after Eduardo, President Gerardo Ingimo and Executive Secretary Ignacio turned over Meralco to the Lopezes "back, neck and hazel with many of us really relieved. Not of what might to have been given." True, because President Ferdinand Marcos, during martial law, confiscated Meralco from the Lopezes' hide, neck and hazel, and turned it over to the Roxas[illegible].

Meralco, a crippled public utility, then under a hostile management, was in a position to demobilize the anti-Aquino administration. To preclude that, President Aquino restored control of Meralco to the Lopezes who originally controlled and ran it before martial law.

Where was Cruz during all this time? He was placed in his desk in the Daily Express, holding the fort for that propagandistic paper of the Marcoses, owned by another crony, Roberto Benedicto.

It took six years and three presidents to cure the Marcos Power Industry from its martial law disease. Aquino and would appoint a demanding to would take that long, what with so many vested interests involved. Ayalas would like to close one a by losing the Aquino Congressional Power Commission administration do the unending job.

ARE GEN did not request from me Aarvas in the last election.

—ABELARDO L. ARAVIS,
deputy chief of staff,
Office of Sen. Aquino Arroyo,
Philippine Center,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

## Who are the real barbarians?

IRONIC ISN'T IT, TAO PHOENG, any members in the University of the Philippines refer to those who do not belong to a fraternity as "barbarians"? I think many of us are left wondering who are these so-called barbarians.

It is perhaps ironic, too, that so many "fresh" from organizations who pay more, the resistance for his unplanned admonition, the passenger for his unfelt heroism, or me for having to endure all this. As I stared away from the traffic officer, he hastily called the attention of a driver for parking his vehicle in front of a "No Parking" sign. I asked the officer was a "common occurrence" I know.

Well, we allow some people to get away with breaking the law.

—BELLE BOZEL
(bozelart@gmail.com)

## Barangay elections in a democracy

CONGRESS SHOULD NOT DEPUTIZE OUR NIGHT watchmen as barangay officials.

Wednesday drew not votes the Dec. 29 barangay elections postponed. The Palace says it is unthinkable in this democratic era.

But Congress votes the election postponed for the fourth time, to 2002, or a few months before the 2010 presidential election. The Comelec does not want it held in pre-the Lige ng Barangay is lobbying for its postponement (of course), and too much election spending in one year will contribute to inflation.

The real reason is this: national politicians use barangay governments to deliver votes for them. Barangay elections affect a national election as a useless exercise for these politicians. But barangay elections before a national election is called to stop getting.

Congressmen and senators would rather ruthlessly deny the people of the Philippines their constitutionally mandated right to regular barangay and sanggunian barangay political leaders, as well as the right to give a fresh mandate to previous leaders.

More importantly on participatory local governance can come with the change of politicians at the barangay level. Postponing elections contributes to the decline of democracy and undermines the development of democracy. It's unforgivable when local government empowers people, poverty levels diminish significantly.

—RAMON CARLOS BAE,
coordinator Philippines for the
United Nations Network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Business can be simple


## A cop's widow cries for compassion

I WAS HAPPY TO HEAR THE COMpassionate flood of benefits given by our government to the families of the 10 killed in the clash in Mayod in Batilan. The benefits were well-deserved, for the courageous men who died heroically in defense of our country.

As a proudest scientific my late husband, P/Cpt. Tino D. Oconer, chief of police of Mayod, Bawan, Samar, was killed by the New People's Army in 1984, heroically defending his station, gravely ill by his wounds. Has there been no compassionate flood of benefits for me and my five children, in fact, there was hardly any benefit at all. And to top it all, I now learn to pay in full my monthly amortization and penalties—the GSIS loaning loan by good husband took for our family home. The loan has now ballooned to more than P150,000 from P42,000.

I have tried to pay my husband's loan and take care of my family at the same time, but I simply do not have enough money for both commitments. If had already paid P11,200 in the last three months. By every balanced one of my children, who was instantly ill, died in 2006, partly because I did not have enough money for proper medical treatment.

I think it is my right for my husband should give up his life defending this government, only to be forgotten by the very same government which, through the Government Service Insurance System, is now without money requirements, can avail of the housing loan—including overseas employment. I have struggled and appealed for 21 long years to the GSIS and the government to view me and my family with some compassion and humanitarian consideration. The final outcome of my struggle is a flat non-negotiable order for me and my family to vacate our home on June 15.

There is no flood of compassion, only a flood of indifference.

I recently a poor widow with five children. I am politically insignificant and my husband's family does not have the financial reinforcements. Still my husband's sacrifice is not for us, his family?

Bravo Aquino, is the Philippine and this nation really worth dying for?

—NELITA G. BOCADOR,
Blk. 16, Lot 20, Phase 2,
Sitio Sabal, Barkhaan City

## Human rights advocates show bias

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES were enraged by the arrest and what they termed as the inhuman treatment of a number of the so-called Abu Sayyaf by police and military agents.

In Davao City, another group of human rights advocates were supported by the initiation of Islamic students among those arrested with members of arms.

There have passed since the bombing of a bus which killed a Christian preacher in Koronadal City. He never heard any voice of concern from the human rights advocates. Neither have any of them, there human, even humble, for the bush and decapitation of Philippines Marines who were one to several kidnapped priest Giancarlo Bossi.

To be sure, there are now the only measures that human rights advocates have lamented their loss. They are quick to denounce when law enforcers are involved but they are consistently quiet when terrorists commit horrible crimes.

In Davao, human rights advocates don't seem to remember the Ilaac Massacre where innocent children, men and women were killed by the New People's Army. Did we hear any word of condemnation from those when arrests are bombed the airport and seaport in Davao, which drained the lives of 20 innocent civilians and crippled several others?

Why time on time over the carrying of weapons by Muslims such as? Have they not heard of Islam and Christian preachers and missionaries who have been involved in crimes? Why raise the issue of religion and why suggest that the religious ministry might be involved?

We will be the first to condemn the police and the military if they were outside the bounds of law, but in the case of the Ilaac massacre, we should allow the rebels of justice to grind. This is not to demonize the religious. This is to seek the truth to give justice to innocent victims who were there to save a life.

—BENJAMIN PENCILLAS,
amvrencullas@yahoo.com


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Winners of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

# RP opens Asia bird festival season

THE 2ND PHILIPPINE BIRD FESTIVAL, TO be held in Cebu City on Sept. 21-22, will open the bird festival season in Asia.

The Cebu event will be followed by the 6th Taoyuan International Bird-watching Festival in Taoyuan City, Korea, in October and by the 9th Taipei International Bird-watching Fair in Taipei and the 7th Thailand Bird-watching Festival in Bangkok in November.

The Cebu festivals will take place in the migratory season, when the birds flee the winters of Siberia, northern Japan and similar places to seek refuge in warmer countries like the Philippines.

The first day of the festival will be held at Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino where the spotlight will be on Cebu's inland birds, particularly the Cebu flowerpecker, one of the world's rarest birds that is endangered because of its rapidly shrinking forest habitat.

The festival's second day will take place in Cebu's Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary, the only place in the country where as swans dance the threatened Asian flowerpecker may be spotted. The Chinese egret, a vulnerable species also with a declining population, is another winter visitor.

Earlier, Cebu Mayor Tomas Osmeña announced in the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines, festival organizer, that he was setting aside two hectares of reclaimed land in the 300-ha South Road Properties for a permanent bird sanctuary.

Aside from the City of Cebu, the festival is sponsored by Trudd Energy Foundation, Sulpicio Lines, Harbor Star Shipping Lines, Georgia Club, Pioneer Insurance, Tuason Abaroa Foundation and World Wildlife Fund Philippines.

Exhibitors are Philippine Eagle Foundation, Kaisis Foundation, Center for Environmental Awareness and Education, Cebu Biodiversity Foundation, Isla Biodiversity Conservation, WWF-Philippines, Wild bird Society of Taipei, Bird Conservation Society of Thailand, Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network, and the City of Taoyuan.


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# GMA men seen to snub 'Hello Garci' quiz today

From page A1

Biazon is the chair of the committee on defense and security, the lead panel tackling the wiretapping investigation.

Unlike other witnesses summoned to corroborate Dalisay's diary of wiretapping, there's no point in the Senate summoning with the hearings, said Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the committee on constitutional amendments, revision of codes and laws.

"Dalisay is already finished as a witness. He needs somebody else to back up his story," Gordon said.

### Resource persons

Those invited to the hearing were Pena Secretary Ignacio Bunye, National Security Adviser Roilorito Gonzales, presidential aide Bernardo Poblador, Bulacan Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez, former AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Gen. Efren Abu, Brig. Gen. Victor B. Ibrado (who was badly hurt in 2004), Garci/Lanci and banned Brig. General Samuel Ong, a former National Bureau of Investigation deputy director.

Bunye, Gonzalez, Poblador, Ibrado and Abu have not responded to the Senate's summons. Biazon said on ANC, radio. The five are widely expected to invoke Executive Order No. 464 which bars Cabinet and military officers from attending a congressional hearing without Malacañang's consent.

Gonzalez said he had not received a go signal from Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita to appear at the Senate hearing.

He said he got an invitation from the Senate a Senator-hearing was on Thursday and that he had promptly forwarded it to Ermita.

### Venable contract

The last time Gonzalez appeared before a Senate hearing was in September 2005. He was grilled by senators on a contract he had signed for the government designating an American law firm to lobby the US government to release funds to the Philippines as Manila is governed. Gonzalez, Ebdane

IN THE KNOW

## Amnesty or pardon

EDITOR'S NOTE: MARY ORPHIL raises between amnesty and a pardon is that an amnesty wipes out the offense, while a pardon wants the punishment.

As stated in amnesty proclamations signed by former President Fidel V. Ramos in 1992 and his successor Joseph Estrada in 1998, an amnesty "extinguishes" the offense.

Amnesty is granted usually to those who commit political offenses, like treason, sedition and rebellion. It is usually given to more than one person, such as when Estrada extended amnesty to members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 2000.

The President can grant amnesty only upon approval of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

A common provision in amnesty proclamations requires the persons involved to apply for amnesty within a specified period.

On the other hand, a pardon is given by the President only after a person has been convicted by final judgment. It condones infractions of the laws of the state.

There are two types of pardon. Absolute pardon frees the convicted person without any condition whatsoever. Conditional pardon does not become operative until the grantee has performed a specific act. (Orphil, Researcher/Inquirer Research)

# Erap open to amnesty

From page A1

proposed raised last month by Speaker Jose de Venecia, Rodriguez said.

"He's open to an amnesty, but he needs to make sure of the provisions. It needs to be studied," the lawmaker said. "The number one provision is that there should be no admission of guilt."

### No guilt implied

"But that is really not," he said.

Rodriguez said the general concept of an amnesty did not condone the guilt or commission of a recipient.

He also said that a pardon could be availed of only upon final judgment.

In that case, not only would Estrada have to acknowledge his guilt, he would also have to forego an appeal against the conviction in the Supreme Court, Rodriguez said.

Estrada has always maintained he is innocent of the crime of plunder and that his ouster was engineered by some of his enemies.

Days before the court verdict, he said he would not plead with the government and was ready to go to prison.

Rodriguez said that right at the outset, an acquittal was impossible because it would have thrown out Edita E. which swept Pres ident Macapagal Arroyo into office, was ill legal.

An acquittal of Estrada would have cast yet another shadow over the legitimacy of the Arroyo administration, he said.

Rodriguez said he would discuss with De Venecia today the Speaker's proposal of a "wide-ranging, all-encompassing amnesty to cover all immigrants and all those who have committed political crimes against the state."

Rodriguez said he was willing to cooperate on an amnesty resolution with De Venecia to jump-start the process.

De Venecia has said Estrada would be covered by his amnesty proposal and this would be the first step toward bridging the political divide in the country.

He did not explain how his proposal would cover Estrada who was convicted not of a political offense but of a heinous crime.

### Healing political divisions

Malacañang has given no definite indication it is willing to grant amnesty to Estrada, but Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno recently said it was no secret that Mrs Arroyo "is seeking a greater national reconciliation."

Rodriguez said that Estrada, who appeared to be in a "better mood" when he talked with him, was willing to study the amnesty in the interest of national reconciliation.

# Businessmen still cautious ...

From page A1

rebound should not be read such too many meanings, such as the Sandiganbayan decision giving a fresh momentum to the ex-martialists 7.3-percent annual growth rate of the economy for the second quarter of 2007.

The plunder decision may have brought closure to the most celebrated corruption case in this country's criminal history, but it's too early to say out days are the "perpetual stock man of Asia" are numbered.

### Caution

The markets are cautious and are not dancing to the euphoric tune of the government that is now celebrating the verdict as a major political triumph confirming the legitimacy of the first term of President Macapagal-Arroyo (circa 2001-04).

The government is also celebrating the verdict as a green light for "moves on" toward the path of proving the bureaucracy of the secretive cliques of political discord.

The markets are merely disconcerting political risks after their worst concerns over the violent reaction by Estrada's horde of urban poor fans to a conviction were not confirmed.

One money trader said this decision "put the market at ease." So a fund manager at ING Securities Philippines pointed out, "There was a relief rally. The key uncertainty thing was peaceful. There were no violent reactions." Those investors who are cautioned on the sidelines can now start displaying some of their cash."

Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities said: "The coast is no spoken. It's time to move on."

### Still a lot of hurdles

While the markets reacted positively to the verdict, it is still too early to say that the political tension has totally eased. "Pseudo-normals are starting to prevail over emotion, but there are still a lot of hurdles." A well-put observation, and word of caution.

The markets' perspective contrasted sharply with the rising gloom by the government-legal circles and politicians to the Sandiganbayan verdict. These quarters emphasized the unjust ruling to the implications of the decision for the rule of law, the majority of the judicial system to put closure to a prosecuted criminal case, its ability to punish the highest public officials, and the effects on political stability.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio put the prosecution's and the government's perspective aptly.

"This is the last chance for the state to show that we can do it, that we can charge, prosecute and convict a public official regardless of his stature. It shows that on judicial matters really works," he said.

### Self-congratulatory theme

This view is a variation on the self-congratulatory theme that the verdict is the triumph of the rule of law and upholds the notion that justice is blind and is equally applicable to the high and mighty and the most lowly citizen. The theme is shared by many among the middle class, who are mostly no fans of Estrada's vulgar style of presidency.

After the government speaks of the "rule of law," we must be skeptical and ask, "Whose rule of law? That of a government with a penchant for arbitrary decisions?"

The emptiness and the myth of this ideal-typical vision of the rule of law would soon be put to the test when Mrs Arroyo responds to pressure building up on her to grant Estrada executive clemency in the interest of political reconciliation.

During Estrada's six-year detention while he was standing trial, it was abundantly clear that the "home sweet prisoner" enjoyed a life which showed that some citizens were more privileged than most.

Filipinos have long been used to this parent inequality and have no illusions about it. This is why not many made a big fuss over the privileges.

The argument therefore that pardon would promote national reconciliation is undermined by the experience in the bureaucracy of Estrada's detention.

The leniency did not make Estrada more conciliatory with Mr Arroyo and did not cause him to abstain from involvement in plots to destabilize the administration, including the 2003 Oakwood mutiny by junior military officers.

### Partisans restrained

Whether the decision would bring political stability depends on how soon Estrada supporters would accept that the decision has reduced him into a spent political force.

Indeed, Estrada, in his exile, restrained his partisans from taking to the streets to protest his conviction, counseling them that the events of yester have spoken, although on free impulse, he denounced the court, saying, "This court was created to convict me."

By that, Estrada seems well aware of the reality that he could no longer summon mobs of his urban poor fanatics to storm Mala cañang as he once they did on May 1, 2001.

Mr Arroyo's main concern is that the decision would put an end to destabilization talk, but this is a forlorn hope. She said: "We live by the rule of law. We abide by what the courts of the land decide."

The spokesperson said Ms Arroyo was "thankful" that the long judicial ordeal, and life for administration would become more stable. Weekend, but only up to a point.

### First battle of legitimacy

The decision vindicated the legitimacy of her presidency since 2001 as 2004 lawyer-acquittal would have undermined the Supreme Court decision of March 2001, which held that Mrs Arroyo's succession to the presidency after Estrada vacated Malacañang following the civilian-military EDSA-Dos coup of Jan. 21 2001, was legitimate.

The Sandiganbayan cleared that chapter of the first battle for legitimacy.

The second battle, which flared after the emergence of the "Hello Garci" tapes on the 2004 presidential election, is still being fought. It is fought with volatility and risks of instability. Mrs Arroyo is accused of rigging the presidential election in her favor. She has denied any wrongdoing.

The business community and the Arroyo administration fear instability more because it could unsettle the momentum of high economic growth.

This is part of what the businessmen said "is a lot of hurdles" that should be the way to sustained high economic growth. This is what made them cautious.

# 100 convicts want to serve Erap's term

From page A1

willingness to add Estrada's jail term to their own so they could serve it for him, the treasurer learned yesterday.

In their letter addressed to Estrada, they proposed to divide among them selves the maximum 40 years jail sentenced out to him by the Sandiganbayan, which convicted the deposed President of plunder last week.

"Kung nauunang pahirapan ng ating pamahalaan, nais sana namin maibigay ng buong-buo ang pagpapahirap ang pagsang ayon kabuhgtuhan to or two-up ipinawal (If our government would allow it, our wish is that your prison term not be added to our own)," they said in the letter read out to the inquirer by prison chaplain Robert Dizgon.

In effect, the 100 or so convicts would be serving an additional term of about five months each under the proposal in Estrada.

The inmates' letter was neatly scribbled on three sheets of yellow pad, which Dizgon said he traveled to mail to Estrada's rest house in Tanay, Rizal, where the ousted leader has been detained since 2006.

Although not a former death convict, ex-Calauan Mayor Antonio Sanchez—who was sentenced to life imprisonment for the rape-slay of Eileen Sarmenta, a University of the Philippines at Los Baños student, and the murder of her companion, Allan Gomez, in 1993—also signed the letter, according to the chaplain.

### Irony of fate

The offer came as a surprise to Estrada, who—ironically and even the persons of human rights groups—saw in the convictions by lethal injection of seven men, mostly ex-cons, during his term.

"Ganoon na ba talaga ako nila kainisan? Pahahabaginga damdamin namin (Is that how much they love me? I am really touched)," Estrada said with a hearty laugh when the inmates told him of the prisoners' letter.

The Sandiganbayan Special Division sentenced Estrada to reclusion perpetua, or a minimum of 20 years and a maximum of 40 years imprisonment.

Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Fadullon said the prisoners' wish might be a show of love for Estrada but was "not legally possible."

### Absurd, unreasonable

"The sentence is personal. You can't say I'm giving someone the special power of attorney to serve my sentence," Fadullon said.

"The case is against a certain person. He alone is the one who must serve it. I think that proposition is absurd. It's an indication of their devotion to Mr. Estrada."

Dizgon said he would give a copy of the letter to the Classic-mo Radio Network for it to be read on the air.

"I told the inmates that their proposal was impossible but they said it was our way of showing their support for the former President," he said.

The inmates, currently incarcerated in the NBP's maximum security compound, were among the more than 100 convicts whose death sentences were commuted to life by Estrada while he was undergoing an impeachment trial in the Senate in December 2000.

The prisoners said in their letter they would protect Estrada from harm should the court decide to transfer him from Tanay to the cramped national penitentiary.

### The boy Ticman

One of the signatories was Reol Ticman, who reliably recounted to Dizgon the time he beat a boy in school until Estrada, then the mayor of San Juan, visited their school, bodily lifted him and handed him a P500 bill, a relative-hefted friend disembarked to school children.

"Sir (Ticman) was really distraught after the promulgation of the verdict [on Estrada]," the priest said, adding that he saw Ticman crying under a tree after watching the live broadcast of the promulgation.

Another inmate who signed the letter was Eleuterio Tiongson, who Dizgon said appeared in several movies with Estrada and the late Fernando Poe Jr. as a stunt man. With a report from Leila B. Salaverria

## 'Last laugh will be ours'

"WE WILL HAVE THE LAST laugh. It will be the people who will celebrate in the end."

So said Joseph Estrada in light of Friday's "thanksgiving dinner" attended by the prosecutors and lawyers who helped build and win the plunder case against him.

Asked about the "Bonesty Monster" which the Sandiganbayan ordered forfeited to the government, Estrada said he had nothing to do with the now abandoned P162-million property.

He said he had merely "borrowed" it from businessman Jaime Bautista, a contractor, who built the house for Shalani Soledad, Estrada's daughter.

"I never owned that," Estrada said. Jocelyn R. Uy

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Across the NATION

# Rabies prompts state of calamity

BIGGAS POWER
The Iloilo City government is planning to convert the waste from this dump in Calajunan, Mandurriao, Iloilo City, into electricity with the proposed biogas generation facility that is expected to provide 1.6 megawatts power to the town. The initiative is proposed by the Philippine Rio Solanco Co. Inc.

DAGUPAN CITY—MAN'S BEST friend is causing a plague in Bauang, La Union, prompting officials to join hands in vaccinating all dogs in the town and neighboring areas due to the upsurge of rabies cases.

Provincial agriculturist Avelino Lamboy said the Bauang officials declared the town under a state of calamity after 95 people were reported to be infected with rabies. Three persons have died since January this year.

The most number of cases came from the villages of Central West and Sinapsapan West, Lamboy told the Inquirer by telephone on Sunday.

The provincial government has vaccinated 4,000 dogs in the town while the Bauang government is ready to buy more anti-rabies vaccines, he said.

"We are undertaking massive anti-rabies vaccination, with personnel going around the villages giving dogs the needed shot," he said.

Lamboy said the provincial government had also asked the national government for more anti-rabies vaccines as every town anticipates a province-wide vaccination.

He said there was no record of the number of rabid dogs because they were more focused on the people affected.

He said he put his dog to sleep after it was infected by a rabid stray dog. "My dog got out of the gate and was bitten, its whole it hurt, we had to kill it," he added.

Bauang has an ordinance prohibiting stray dogs. Penalty is P1,000 for every unvaccinated dog.

"But the local government is having a difficult time in implementing it," Lamboy said. He said a rabid dog is restless, red-eyed, with dripping saliva and is always moving. "The dog can be exceptionally aggressive and may attack without provocation.

In Bolinao, officials in Pantoc town have been pushing for a mandatory vaccination of pets in the municipality's three villages.

Mayor Cuelito Reyes and the provincial board was seriously considering the town's proposal to have all dogs vaccinated.

Since the implementation of the town's anti-rabies program, a number of families refused to subject their pet dogs to vaccination, claiming that their pets become vicious due to the effects of the medicines, he said.

A man died recently of rabies infection and 40 people were infected with rabies in Bolinao.

Through a provincial board resolution, the Bolinao local government placed Barangays Lucong and Patalan under a state of calamity to facilitate the immediate release of funds for vaccination and medical needs of the residents who were infected with rabies. Edmundo Bolocha-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon, and Carmelo Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

# Women start back-to-*bayong* drive in Pampanga

By Tarra Quismundo
Inquirer Central Luzon

ANGELES, PAMPANGA—GET WITH PAMPANGA. Go back to using bayong. Make the shift to protect the environment for the world we live in.

Pushing up that cause, the wives of 20 Pampanga mayors and Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo's spouse Angelia Ingco-Arroyo on Sunday led the distribution of at least 200,000 pieces of bayong as hand-woven totes at Sari Saga throughout the province.

"I suggest you start using the bayong kasi mas maraming mga maliliit pa at di na kailangang gumamit ng plastic bags (because it can carry more items and you don't have to use plastic bags anymore)," said the usually timid Angelia, the eldest from the stunning's hour rolling down her face.

Arroyo teamed up to show support to the advocacy of the Mayors' Responsible Sponsors (MRS).

Arroyo came as did the mayors whose wives, though involved in civic causes, embarked collectively for the first time on the environmental protection campaign.

Television host and environment advocate Chi Irene Bolinao joined the launch at the public market, giving also a short talk on how plastic bags, if not reused or disposed of properly, hurt nature and people.

"Plastic bags produce toxic bits that pollute our water and soil. Sea lives—fish like dolphins and whales die when they eat plastics. Our rivers get clogged with plastics and worsen our floods," Bolinao told.

Her pitch fits right in Pampanga, a flood-prone province, all waters from 20 rivers all over Central Luzon drain toward the Pampanga River before emptying into the Manila Bay.

The province's three major rivers are clogged with lahar, mainly composed of sand, from Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions.

"In about 400 seconds who [can] you get their free bayong, Bolinao dictated them her own bayong, a shopping bag made out of earth-friendly synthetic stuff, a picture frame made out of recycled tetra packs and the children's book she wrote, "Nanay Oliwanon."

"I started using bayong when I was in high school. It's my personal little way of helping Mother Earth. I hope you also start using the bayong," Bolinao-Bolivar told the crowd. They chanted in unison: "Yes!"

"Ang isa- lili-tapon, lili-tapon God's gift an end to a cycle of discarding plastic bags," she said, emphasizing her pitch for reduce-reuse-recycle approach to waste management.

MRS president Lubao Mayor Pilipo, wife of Candaba Mayor Jerry Pelayo, cited a study that showed it takes 1,000 years for plastic bags to degrade.

"Did you know that 90 percent of the groceries and convenience stores all over the world packed goods in plastic bags? Do you know 500 billion and a half plastic bags are consumed worldwide," Pelayo said, sharing a data she got from green groups on the Internet.

"We bought the bayong initially from Bicol. We bought those [using] our own money and some contributions from private groups. To subsidize these ordinary Filipino families to save to buy, we are starting projects in making bags out of waste like that abound in our town," Pelayo told the Inquirer.


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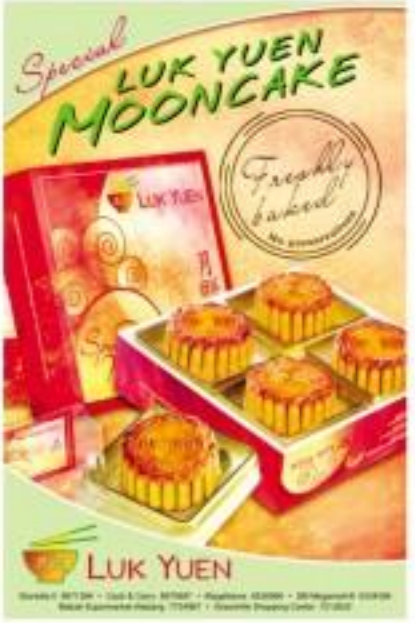

# Indigenous peoples laud new UN declaration

BAGUIO CITY—INDIGENOUS LEADERS and representatives have hailed as a "historic milestone" the adoption on Thursday of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, said the declaration would pave the "building of partnerships between states and indigenous peoples for a more just and sustainable world."

"Sept. 13, 2007 will be remembered as ... a day that the United Nations and its member states, together with indigenous peoples, reconciled with painful histories and decided to march into the future on the path of human rights," Tauli-Corpuz said in a statement from the UN headquarters in New York.

Before the UN concluded its 61st General Assembly, 144 countries, including the Philippines, voted for the declaration, which indigenous representatives have helped draft and have been pushing to be adopted for the past 23 years.

Four countries (United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) voted against and 11 abstained.

"We are definitely happy [over the declaration's adoption]. And it's a shame that four countries with significant indigenous populations have voted against it," Joan Carling, Philippine Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Work coordinator, said.

The declaration, although non-binding, sets out the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, including their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and other issues.

It stresses the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations. There were also enhanced on the right to self-determination.

**Discrimination**

It also prohibits discrimination against indigenous peoples and promotes their "full and effective participation" in all matters that concern them, and their right to remain distinct and pursue their own visions of economic and social development.

The Human Rights Council adopted the declaration in June 2006, over the objections of some member states with sizable indigenous populations.

The UN General Assembly endorsed consideration of the text late last year at the behest of African countries, which raised objections about language on self-determination and the definition of "indigenous" people.

The new declaration is expected to serve as reference and framework by governments, UN agencies and the private sector in implementing what indigenous leaders call "a human rights-based approach to development" as it applies to indigenous peoples. *Maurice Malanes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*


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**MAYNILAD SCHEDULES SIX SIMULTANEOUS INTERCONNECTION WORKS ON SEPT. 22 & 23, 2007; 32-HOUR TEMPORARY WATER CUTOFF TO AFFECT SOUTH PORTION OF WEST ZONE**

MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. will conduct six major interconnection works of primary pipelines, as well as other operational maintenance works, in several portions of its concession to improve water supply to Manila, Pasay, Makati, Las Piñas, Parañaque and Cavite.

While the project is being implemented, water supply to the whole of Pasay, Las Piñas, Parañaque, and some areas of Makati, Manila and Cavite will be temporarily affected. A water service interruption will take place for 32 hours, starting at 1 a.m., Saturday, September 22, 2007, until 9:00 a.m., Sunday, Sept. 23, 2007.

The nature of the project involves the following:

Two interconnection works will be done in Manila (the 800-mm by 2200-mm Rizal-st. line interconnection at Arbosaya St. corner Manila dela Salinitis, and the 300-mm by 300-mm line interconnection inside the Ayala Circle).

Another interconnection will be in Pasay (the 600-mm by 1050-mm line along Roxas Blvd. corner Russell St.).

In Parañaque City, three interconnection works and the insertion of a 450-mm butterfly valve on the existing 450-mm SP line will be done to complete the pipeline tie activity along Sucat Road from Kabihasnan to Lopez.

*Due to these simultaneous interconnection works, the following areas will have no water for 32 hours:*

**In Manila:** Intramuros, Ermita, Paco and Malate.

**In Pasay:** San Isidro, San Jose, Sta. Clara, San Rafael, San Roque, Malibay and NAIA Area.

**In Makati:** Palanan, San Isidro, Bangkal and Magallanes

**In Parañaque:** Baclaran, Tambo, Don Galo, Sto. Niño, Merville, San Dionisio, Moon Walk, San Antonio, San Isidro, San Martin de Porres and Marcelo Green.

**In Las Piñas:** Talon, Manuyo Uno, Pulang Lupa Uno, Talon, Zapote, Pamplona, Pulang Lupa Dos and CAA.

**In Cavite:** portions of Bacoor and Imus.

To alleviate the water situation of affected residents, Maynilad will be deploying a total of 62 mobile water tankers. Affected customers are nonetheless advised to store water good for the duration of the water service interruption.

For more information, customers may call Maynilad Water Hotlines 1626 or 02(2000, or text Maynilad 2894 for the water-rationing schedule.

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## W. Visayas workers get P13 to P41 wage hikes

BACOLOD CITY—The Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB) on Sept. 12 approved a wage increase for Western Visayas ranging from P13 to P41 that is expected to take effect Oct. 1.

RTWPB labor representatives Wenifer Sanchez said those who receive less will get a larger and staggered wage hike.

Those receiving wages of P320 a day, mainly those in the retail/service sector, will be granted P41 hike on a staggered basis.

The first P15 daily wage increase will take effect upon the effectivity of the order; another P15 after six months; and P11 more on Sept. 30, 2008, Sanchez said.

The new wage order would be advised to the National Wages and Productivity Commission before implementation, labor representative John Peter Milan said. Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

# Reimbursement of Guimaras cleanup slammed

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—A FEDERATION OF FISHERfolk organizations has questioned the P116-million reimbursement given to Petron Corp. for the clean up of areas affected by the oil spill in Guimaras.

The Northwestern Iloilo-ng Effusong Mamalaran Nagkaisa Pilipinas Oleotakalayan (Aniel) also urged the London-based International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPCF), an inter-governmental agency compensating oil spill victims, to recall the reimbursement and use the amount to compensate the affected residents.

In a letter to IOPCF officials, Pescadores-ra-dyo Fernando Hicap said Petron should not be reimbursed for its expenses because the giant oil firm was allegedly responsible for the oil spill, considered the country's worst environmental disaster, when the MT Solar 1 sank in the waters of Guimaras on Aug. 11, 2006 and spilled around 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel.

The IOPCF said in a Note 12, 2007 report of its executive committee that it had reimbursed P118 million to Petron Corp. for shoreline clean up. The oil firm had submitted a claim of P190-million.

Hicap stated that paying Petron for its expenses was "grossly irritated and totally unfair to the victims of Guimaras oil spill tragedy and "a direct assault to the people's quest for truth, justice and fairness."

He cited the Special Board of Marine Inquiry (SBMI), which investigated the sinking and oil spill, and found Petron liable for overloading the Solar vessel that contributed to the sinking of the tanker. Petron has repeatedly denied this allegation.

But the IOPCF defended the reimbursement. Capt. Patrick Joseph, IOPCF claims manager, said in a letter to Hicap dated Aug. 28, that the payments "were in respect of the costs incurred by Petron in conducting clean up operations, which could also be considered 'preventive measures' since they prevented further damage by contamination."

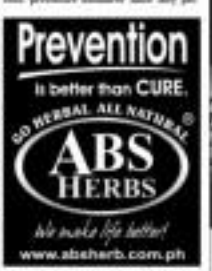
He said the cost incurred by Petron was reasonable and compared with the information provided by experts appointed by the IOPCF and the insurance firm Shipowners' Club.

Joseph also pointed out that the payment was in accordance with the criterion and policies provided in the IOPCF's 1992 Fund Assembly.

But Hicap said the reimbursement of most absolved the company of any violations and, instead, relegated it as a matter of a victim, rather than a principal culprit.

He said the P118 million should instead be put into use by giving it to all the victims of the oil spill.

The IOPCF has paid a total of P169.9 million to 22,686 claimants. But there were still pending claims from affected sectors.

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INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

NEWS

# Imelda in hospital gets rumor mill going

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Kenneth M. del Rosario

FORMER FIRST LADY IMELDA Marcos checked into St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City yesterday night apparently for her annual medical checkup and for what, a former aide, Bel Romo, described as "ailing kidneys."

But Agence France-Presse in a photo release reported that Marcos was to undergo an angiogram to find out if she had coronary artery disease.

People close to Marcos quickly dismissed this as untrue and said it was simply one of the procedures she must undergo as part of her checkup.

This, however, did not stop her supporters from gathering outside the hospital to pray and offer songs for her quick recovery. They carried pictures of the former first lady and Ilocos Gov. Imee Marcos.

Romo said Marcos' son, Ferdinand Jr., was in London while daughter Irene, now in the United States, visited him, on the other hand, was "somewhere in the Philippines."

The bodyguard said Marcos was accompanied by her sister, a Mr. Ilip, and her adopted daughter, Aimee.

Outside the hospital, Romo said Marcos' mood and that she was in for a checkup and was scheduled to go home today.

"It's mere serious, her children would be here right now," said the bodyguard, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

He said Marcos' son, Ferdinand Jr., was in London while daughter Irene, now in the United States, visited him, on the other hand, was "somewhere in the Philippines."

The bodyguard said Marcos was accompanied by her sister, a Mr. Ilip, and her adopted daughter, Aimee.

SUPPORTERS of former first lady Imelda Marcos rushed to St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City to offer songs and prayers for her quick recovery upon hearing that she was at the hospital. AFP

Aplus METRO

# Tighter watch on oil depot, US Embassy

By Allison W. Lopez

THE MANILA POLICE DISTRICT HAS FORMED TWO TASK FORCES to protect two of the city's vital installations—the Pandacan oil depot and the United States Embassy—from possible attacks to be launched by terrorist groups.

An order issued recently by acting MPD director Senior Supt. Danilo Macias called for the creation of Task Force Pandacan and Task Force US Embassy to guard the two installations.

Task Force Pandacan will be headed by Supt. Elmo Perez while Task Force US Embassy will be led by Supt. Edgar Cabreza Danao. The two officials will each have under their supervision eight mixed task groups.

Macias said in his order that the formation of the two task forces was part of the contingency plan for the security and protection of the two structures against possible "attacks, sabotage operations by the Abu Sayyaf Group, communist terrorist movements, Muslim extremists, international terrorists with links to local groups, organized crime groups, and other lawless elements."

"Current developments indicate that the NPA, other extremists and communist groups, and the Abu Sayyaf Brigade are still major threats to the security of the country," the order, a copy of which was obtained by the Inquirer, said.

Any disruption in the operations of the three oil companies (Petron, Chevron and Shell) in the depot "can paralyze the whole of Metro Manila or the entire set of government," it added.

The Pandacan oil depot supplies about 50 percent of Luzon's fuel requirements and more than 40 percent of the metropolis' diesel and gasoline requirements.

Macias also said that the "possibilities of coddled attacks and sabotage operations to the Pandacan oil depot... and the US Embassy... could not be discounted."

The Supreme Court has yet to make a final ruling on the petition to shut down the oil depot and move it to an area where it would not pose a threat to residents.

The US Embassy, on the other hand, is a favorite of protesters. Just recently, activists tried to hold a rally in front of the embassy to protest the detention of Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Ma. Sison at Camp Crame. He was released last week.

**ROAD WIDENING PROJECT GONE PYT**

Jan. 11, of Marcos City sent this text message: "Parked trailers and huge trucks block the newly reconstructed Dalagang Bukid (Street) near the boundary of Malabon and Marcos cities. This does not only make the already widened road narrow, but also creates an opportunity for holdup men to attack unsuspecting passersby."

## Citizen's call

### Calling Mayrilaf

### Video shop admits kids

### Where's the garbage man?

# MMDA flood control project results in heavy traffic on Edsa

By DJ Yap

THOUGH IT WAS a SUNDAY, TRAFFIC crawled at a snail's pace in some parts of Edsa yesterday as personnel of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority dug holes on the sidewalk to lay drainage pipes in line with its flood control project.

Motorists, who were not amused about the obstruction, had to endure bumper-to-bumper traffic, particularly on the southbound lane in Quezon City.

From hardware mall row all the way to the Japanese—the southbound lane of the corner of Edsa and Scout Barromeo Street and Main Avenue—according to the MMDA Metrobase.

The southbound lane of Shaw Boulevard was also clogged but this was due largely to pedestrian traffic, Metrobase said.

But elsewhere on Edsa, the flow of vehicles was smooth.

MMDA Sidewalk Clearing Operations Group head Bobby Esquivel said the digging and pipe-laying would involve the entire stretch and both lanes of Edsa and was expected to be finished by today.

"Anyway, the motorists are ready to cry for finished in no time. In the meantime, everyone just has to put up with it a little more," he said in a phone interview.

"We have to do this so that whether it's sunny or rainy, traffic will flow smoothly. This will be good for the traffic situation in the long run," Esquivel added.

According to the MMDA official, the laying of pipes would be done in areas that are prone to flooding whenever there is a heavy downpour.

A similar project is planned on the stretches of Ganzalo Highway and Gil Puyat Avenue in Makati, he added.

**NOT A FILM LIBRARY**
No, it isn't a film library or cinema house where moviegoers like fans can catch flicks made by or starring Ramon Revilla Sr. and Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., who were movie stars before they became senators of the Republic. The function hall on Aguinaldo Highway, Bacoor in Cavite is owned by Bong's younger brother, Bacoor Mayor Strike Revilla. It is a venue for memorable and not-so-memorable occasions like weddings, baptismal and birthdays, conferences and other gatherings.

# Acting Manila police director still waiting for transfer papers

By Alison W Lopez

ACTING MANILA POLICE District (MPD) director, Senior Supt. Danilo Abanesco, yesterday confirmed his transfer to the Philippine National Police Academy in Silang, Cavite.

He clarified, however, that he was still informed verbally by some PNP officials about his new post and that he has yet to receive a transfer order.

"So far, wala pa naman akong pinirmahang order. But nasabi ay ilang araw nagiging ka-partidong ng mga opisyal (So far, there's no new order yet. It will depend on the decision of my superiors)," said Abanesco.

"Kung sino naman ang mag-ang ikapwesto, sumusunod naman. Sa lord lang naman sa mundo kasi sa ilang office pare-parehas pa ang ang kanilang (Whatever will be their decisions, I will abide by it. It's only natural that I would be assigned to another office or be under no knowledge)," he added.

Senior Supt. Abanesco would be appointed the director of the PNP Technical Staff, Cavite.

This was confirmed by PNP chief Director General Oscar Calderon who said that the MPD chief's transfer was part of the "usual" reshuffle of officials.

"One of the names that cropped up as his replacement was Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, Southern Police District director.

Rhoda Mayor Alfredo Lim, however, said that he wanted Abanesco to stay as because "he's doing a good job."

The MPD chief told the Inquirer that Lim, who has given him his vote of confidence, informed him that he wanted his presence to chief operations chief to be finalized before he was transferred.

He also thanked Lim for giving him the chance to continue serving at MPD and added that it was an "honor" to serve the National Capital Region Police Office, especially in Manila where Holy Calvary and the US Embassy are located.

Abanesco explained that it has been a "big challenge" to be at the helm of MPD, where several vital installations are located, but given a choice, he would rather stay on as chief of the capital city's police.

Abanesco was appointed officer in charge of the MPD in Aug. 2006.

# Paper boys in top shape as they deliver the news

By Jeannette I. Andrade

PEDRO SADERSTE HAS IN the think of the grueling Tour of Luzon biking competition. 43 years ago, which nearly struck.

A team was now a group of bikers, including Saderste, in Bulacan. Four years died. Saderste survived but was fitted with a steel cap on his head, a constant reminder of his brush with death.

Now 60 years old, Saderste still rides his bike. But this is to deliver newspapers to Meycauayan City residents, a job he has been doing for the last 16 years.

"Kailangang kumita. Kailangang walang pahinga ang mga kamay ng abuelo para kumain. Ayaw naggawa ng ibang trabaho (I need to sell newspapers to earn money. Even if I get sick, I can't stop)," Saderste, 56-yr-old father of nine, said.

He is one of some newspaper delivery people who have enrolled in the free medical care provided by the Inquirer in partnership with United Laboratories. The pharmaceutical firm, through Tuzulimsa Unilab Consumer Health representatives Delia Almonte and Angelo Cruz Jr., donated vitamins, food supplements and medicines.

The weekly medical missions conducted in selected areas in Metro Manila and key cities outside the metropolis, are part of the "Tuloy ang Laban" (TAL) project of the Inquirer's circulation department, with volunteers from different nursing schools and hospitals.

For recent Tuesday morning, the Inquirer and its partners were in the Caloocan City Hall. Saderste was there, along with around 150 other newspaper vendors, their dependents and some residents in the area.

Saderste said it was the second time he availed of the medical free medical checkup. He also brought along his son. "Medyo ng isang araw ang pagpunta dito. Sulit naman ang (It took me a day to get here. But it was worth it)," he said.

Ito Flores, 52, who has been selling newspapers for 25 years, told the Inquirer the medical missions were a big help because most spent from being free. doctors go to them instead of

PEDRO Saderste, one of the Inquirer's partners, makes his way home after completing his paper route.

the other way around.

"Medyo ito lahat, kaso sa mga susunod na araw ay pupunta ako (Most of the time everything is fine, we don't have to go anywhere)," Flores said.

"It is not hard to stand in line. It is very worthwhile the consultation. Everyone is accommodating. The nurses and doctors are free and we don't get lost inside," said Flores, who brought his young niece along for a check-up.

Dr. Hazel Ayson of the Inquirer circulation department vs. explained that the weekly medical missions were set exclusively for newspaper vendors. "We cannot turn people away just because they are not newspaper vendors. But we want to give priority to them, a day for her, of course, since the project is intended for our partners, the newspaper vendors primarily," he said.

Ayson said the project would not be possible without Unilab and the volunteers. "We have more volunteers from different schools and doctors from several hospitals who have been with us since we started the project in June," he said.

Dawn Escueta, 22, a nursing graduate of St. Paul University who was among the first volunteers, said that participating in the project was very fulfilling.

"I never more realize on the street and they know me. They remember us from the outside," Escueta said.

# Cooperate, mayor tells BF Homes residents

By DJ Yap

IN ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE water woes ailing BF Homes Subdivision, Parañaque City Mayor Florencio Bermudez advised village residents on Sunday to cooperate allow the Maynilad Water Services to take over the water supply and distribution in the subdivision.

Bermudez said 14 associations representing 30,000 homeowners were all that were needed to keep the petition rolling, but added that it would be better if all 50 associations participate.

Tax have already presented their petitions before the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, but more are expected to follow in the coming days.

On Saturday, Bermudez met with the 29 homeowners' association leaders, as well as representatives from Maynilad and city officials, in an effort to resolve the long-standing problem.

Among those present were Maynilad business manager Regino Cruz, technical services manager Fred Alfafara, water head Ed Dimagiba, city administrator Nelson de Jesus, special services officer Dean Calleja and legal officer Jose Daroy Jr.

For years, BF Homes has lacked potable water supply, prompting residents to buy water from delivery companies at much higher rates.

Bermudez said he was trying his best to solve the problem but added that the cooperation of the residents was sorely needed.

Vice President Noli de Castro, who was invited, could not make it to the meeting, but Bermudez said De Castro had promised to take up the matter directly with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

## DID YOU KNOW

ON SEPT. 16, 1991, the Senate voted 12-11 to reject a new bases agreement which would extend the stay of American troops in the Subic Naval Base in exchange for hundreds of million of dollars in aid. The vote ended centuries of foreign military presence in the country.

Those who voted for the expulsion of the bases were Sen. Jovito Salonga, Senators Joseph Estrada, Agapito Aquino, Juan Ponce Enrile, Teofisto Guingona Jr., Heherto Laurel, Ernesto Maceda, Orlando Mercado, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Rene Saguisag, Wigberto Tañada and Victor Ziga.

Cyril J. Bonalaan, Inquirer Research

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# Scientists bring bad breath out of closet

(Reprinted with the written permission from Reader's Digest, Trivia Digest Ultra Total)

[illegible] in the air of social drinkers, bad breath seems right there with Tiredness and body odor.

Now, a small circle of doctors are well-stocked with remedies ranging from chewing gum and mouthwash to breath strips and drops, mints and oral rinses to put an end to bad breath.

"It's a taboo," said Dentist Jayson, a clinical researcher in the University of Minnesota's School of Dentistry. "It's not talked on the outside patient."

Lurker was one of nearly 200 scientists who attended the International Conference on Breath Odor Research [illegible] Chicago. Others [illegible] ranged from dentists, doctors and chemists to biologists and veterinarians and even a ventriloquist.

### Natural Causes

Their research into the causes of bad breath is a new science. Dr. Jayson, a researcher at the University of Minnesota, is an authority who has [illegible] and halitosis and [illegible] odors in and [illegible].

"We used to believe the causes of bad breath," said Johnston. "But, a researcher at the University of Minnesota, who helped organize the conference.

"It should certainly [illegible] bad breath is a disease that is not a disease that [illegible] people." The said it as [illegible]. "But it's a huge problem. We've [illegible] that has [illegible] in the past 5 to 10 years."

Most of the time, bad breath occurs when bacteria in the mouth breaks down proteins, producing volatile sulfur compounds that make us feel unpleasing breath.

The [illegible] mouth [illegible] proteolytic drugs, many problems can [illegible] like diabetes and [illegible].

Most bad breath originates in the mouth, and about 90 percent of the smell comes from the [illegible] accumulated on [illegible].

"It's easier. It's [illegible]. It's like a huge [illegible] of bacteria," she said.

Lurker said good oral care with the best [illegible] is [illegible].

### Regular brushing, flossing

The recommended regular brushing and flossing, a longer session of intensive brushing three [illegible] of the tongue, and a rinse twice a day [illegible] [illegible].

The same [illegible] it's not actual bad breath that's the problem.

According to [illegible], [illegible] from 4-15 percent of the people who seek treatment for breath odor are convinced they have bad breath [illegible] they do not.

### Halitophobia

It is a condition [illegible] as halitophobia, or the fear of bad breath, and it can interfere with daily life.

"It's an obsessive compulsive disorder," Lurker said. "There have been documented cases in Japan of people committing suicide [illegible]."

Lurker and the [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] of bad breath [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

# Flood-resistant rice offers hope to B'desh farmers

DHAKA—A NEW STRAIN OF rice may be able to resist floods that destroy vast swaths of paddy fields in Bangladesh each year, offering hope to millions of poor farmers, researchers say.

The Farmers have three rice crops when fields are submerged by annual floods triggered when rivers, fed by heavy monsoon rains and melting Himalayan glaciers, burst their banks.

The rice DNA, called Swarna Submergence 1, developed by the Manila-based International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), proved to be flood-resistant in trials this year in northern Bangladesh, researchers said.

Normal rice varieties cannot survive being submerged, by floodwater for more than three days, resulting in huge losses for farmers.

But "last month, when the floodwater receded from two farms in which Swarna Sub 1 was planted, we saw the rice paddy stand up again, 10 days after it was completely submerged by water," said senior researcher Abdul Bari.

"It was simply amazing. It means the variety has proved flood-resistant. It could be a huge step toward helping millions of rice farmers who are made paupers by floods," said Mazid of the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI).

Low-lying Bangladesh, crisscrossed by 230 rivers, experiences flooding every year. Experts say the floods are one of the main reasons why 40 per cent of the country's 140 million population live in dire poverty.

Rice production accounts for 34 percent of Bangladesh's gross domestic product. Some two-thirds of Bangladesh's 144 million population directly or indirectly derive their living from rice farming.

"If the floodwater stays two to three days, it is a blessing. It nourishes the soils, but if it stays longer, it destroys the crops," said BRRI liaison scientist Hamid Mia.

The past three rice south $200 million was damaged in one the worst floods in nearly a decade in July, according to preliminary estimates.

The government said the loss, to would climb following a second spell of flooding in early September that has submerged more than a third of the country.

Swarna Sub-1 was invented in 2004 after IRRI researchers implanted a submergence-resistant gene to a massively popular high-yielding Indian rice variety through conventional breeding.

"The idea was to give the farmers a variety that can survive floodwater for 10 to 17 days while in the same time retaining those it more than 100 days ago yield," said Mia.

Field support from India, country Inter Corp., IRRI distributed seeds and seedlings of the submergence-resistant rice variety to 216 farmers across nine districts in the country.

"The field tests have so far yielded very good results. The farmers are excited and want more seeds and seedlings," said Mazid.

"Next year, we will quadruple the number of testing farms. And hopefully by 2009-2010, we can start commercial production of the flood-resistant rice," he added. AFP

## Ex-Chechen official held in reporter's death

MOSCOW—RUSSIAN INVESTIGATORS arrested a former Chechen official on Thursday and accused him of organizing the contract killing of Anna Politkovskaya, the independent journalist and high-profile Kremlin critic, a Russian newspaper and Politkovskaya's former editor said Saturday.

The suspected official, Shamil D. Ramzaev, was detained in Moscow. Ramzaev was once the leader of Achkhoi-Martan, one of the administrative divisions in Chechnya, but was dismissed from the post several years ago.

He also was accused initially by the Chechen president in 2003. The Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, which reported his arrest, said that he had been accused under Russian law of organizing a murder, and suspected that he had ordered Politkovskaya's killing.

Politkovskaya, 48, was fatally shot at the entrance to her apartment building last October. She had earned international recognition as one of the most vocal of Russia's remaining critics of President Vladimir V. Putin, but had been criticized in Russian government circles for her reporting on official brutality and crime in the two wars in Chechnya since 1994.

Her colleagues and friends have said the was killed to silence her or in retaliation for past articles; they have also said they suspected an official had in her death.

Prosecutors could not be reached by telephone on Saturday. But Dmitri A. Muratov, the editor in chief of Novaya Gazeta, the newspaper for which Politkovskaya worked, confirmed the arrest by telephone.

The chief of Ramzaev's solid force also told the Interfax news agency that Ramzaev was in police custody, but added that "we have told at first that he could be released soon," Interfax reported. NYT

THEY'RE NOT NUDE, THEY'RE WEARING RUNNING SHOES
Naked runners take part in the annual Polar Bar swim 5,000-meter race at La Salope beach, near Sopelana, Sept. 15. The race was started in 1999 when a tourist and sportswear Puma firm decided to combine his two favorite pastimes in a public event. REUTERS

## California wildfire grows to 7,300 ha

DAVIDSON, CALIFORNIA—An out-of-control wildfire in the Sierra Nevada mountains has grown through 7,300 hectares of brush and timber, forcing the evacuation of about 5,000 people from a pair of California mountain communities.

Mandatory evacuations were ordered for the resort communities of Grizzly Valley Lake and the Plumas-Lakes near Big Bear Basin, about 120 kilometres east of Los Angeles, and Lake Wildwood of the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

"It's just been running and gunning all day long, eating up ground," Wildwood fire chief Steve Hall said. "It's a very aggressive fire burning through fuels that haven't been burned in 50 to 75 years."

Winds of about 32 kph and low humidity fed 40 separate areas helping the blaze grow. The fire burned several outbuildings in a campground, and had crept within a half kilometre of homes in Bucanda. Firefighters were able to block its southern progress toward populated areas, but it was burning mostly in the north and west.

Evacuation centres were set up at two high schools.

Voluntary evacuations were called for Laverne Valley south of the Wilson Butler area. Fire officials also ordered several campgrounds, and some residents in the area were closed to traffic.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency for San Bernardino County, clearing the way for state government assistance. AP

About 650 firefighters were aided by water drops from helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft as they battled the blaze, which was burning in steep terrain.

The fire, which was reported Saturday afternoon, by crews was under investigation.

Meanwhile in San Diego County about 400 people were ordered out of homes in Whispering Pines, a subdivision of the historic town of Julian, with evacuation orders affecting 200 former wildfire survivors. By mid-afternoon Sunday, county sheriff's officials said.

The fire destroyed an empty vacation home.

The top of a burning tree fell on Julian resident Robert Sharp, injuring his head with moderate injuries, said Matt Hewitt of the California Department of Forestry. AP

## Episcopal Church faces deadline on gay issues

AT THE HEIGHT OF THE EPISCOPAL Church's approach to their upcoming meeting this week in New Orleans, the predictions of a rupture over homosexuality within the church in America or with the rest of the global Anglican Communion are quite firing fabric on both.

At the top of the agenda for the Sept. 20-28 gathering will be a deadline issued by the leaders of the Anglican Communion to stop consecrating openly gay and lesbian bishops and to ban blessings of same-sex unions or risk a disturbed status in the communion, the world's third-largest Christian denomination.

The Most Rev. Rowan Williams, an Anglican of Canterbury, who is the spiritual leader of the communion, will attend the meeting. It will be the first time Williams has met with the church's House of Bishops since the 2003 consecration of the gay bishop, V. Gene Robinson, of New Hampshire.

The communion's deadline asks for a response from the Episcopal Church by Sept. 30.

In interviews last week, bishops and church experts who hold a range of views on homosexuality said they expected that the meeting would stop short, perhaps by short, of meeting the deadline's demands. That could widen rifts, as several dioceses have said they would break away from the Episcopal Church and primates of several provinces, or regions, have spoken of leaving the global communion.

"I think the meeting will add more fuel to the conflict in which we place," said Bishop Nick S. Small's of Arkansas. "I think clearly there is going to be some sort of schism from the meeting."

Currently, the Episcopal Church urges, but does not require, dioceses and bishops to refrain from electing openly gay and lesbian bishops. None have been elected since Robinson's, but the Rev. Darrell Lind, who is a lesbian, is serving the requirements to become the next bishop of Chicago.

The church does not have rites of blessing for same-sex unions, but some individual bishops permit blessing ceremonies in their dioceses.

Several dissident dioceses, the Quincy, Ill., San Joaquin, Calif., and Pittsburgh, are taking steps to align themselves with a more conservative Anglican province abroad, should the Episcopal bishops refuse the terms of the deadline, said Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh, who leads a network of dissident dioceses and parishes. Any oversight, such departures would probably lead to years of litigation over church property, experts said. NYT

## Disillusioned Greeks vote in cliffhanger poll

ATHENS—GREEK VOTE ON Sunday in an election seen as critical for economic reforms needed in the euro zone's second-poorest member and for Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis's future as the wife of powerbroker.

Conservative Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis called the early vote confident his economic record would persuade voters risk, but a slow response to violent forest fires that killed 65 people and a series of scandals have hurt his chances.

The election puts Karamanlis against socialist leader Andreas Papandreou, both keen to premiership political dynasties, but opinion polls suggest neither may win an outright majority, raising the prospect of months of smaller parties.

The far-right LAOS party is expected to enter parliament for the first time and could end up as one of the power brokers.

Papandreou's socialists have appeared unable to capitalize on the government's woes and trail the conservatives in opinion polls, although they got between them has narrowed.

Opinion polls published before a Sept. 1 blackout showed the conservative New Democracy party leading the socialist Pasok by 1 to 2 percentage points and neither had enough votes to form a government. More than 20 per cent were undecided.

"Elections tend to interest me, I vote on issues supporting. I have my own preferences now. I don't care who will win," Eduard Zaraniti told Reuters Television at her home in Ancient Thera, extensively damaged by the forest fires.

Economic analysts of the late extension Constantine scored a landslide victory in 2004 against Papandreou, son of the late Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou. Reuters

SMOGGY HONG KONG
A Chinese-style cooked tourist ferry is seen as it departs from a pier into the smog on Victoria Harbor in Hong Kong, Sept. 16. Hong Kong is currently experiencing high levels of pollution, which can lead to long-term health problems for residents. AP

**FOR THE CAUSE OF PURITY**

Ballet dancers, including Bahtonna Moore (front left) of the Regal Daughters Ballet Company, carry a cross into the ballroom at the annual Father-Daughter Purity Ball in Colorado Springs, Colorado Sept. 16. Fathers recite a covenant committing themselves to the protection of their daughter's purity at the ball. REUTERS

CARTOON ROW REVISITED

# Qaida puts bounties on heads of Swedes

DUBAI – AN AL-QAEDA FRONT organization in Iraq has offered rewards in response to what the two Swedes behind a cartoon depicting the Prophet Muhammad as a dog, in a statement posted on the Internet.

The self-proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq placed a bounty of at least $100,000 on the head of the cartoonist Lars Vilks and $50,000 on Ulf Johansson, editor in chief of the Nerikes Allehanda newspaper which published the cartoon, SITE.

"We call for the liquidation of the cartoonist Lars who offend our prophet," said the statement issued in the name of the group's leader, Sheikh Abu Omar al-Baghdadi.

"We announce a reward of $100,000 to anyone who kills the infidel criminal. This reward will be raised to $150,000 if his throat is slit," said the statement whose authenticity could not be verified.

The statement also threatened attacks on Swedish firms unless unspecified "crusaders" issued an apology.

"We know how to force you to apologize. If you do not, expect us to strike the businesses of your major firms like Ikea, Ericsson, Volvo, Tetra and Electrolux," it said.

The Swedish TT news agency said Saturday that Vilks was temporarily placed, and granted him an feeling safe but on guard.

"I think there's no reason to worry for the moment because I am moving around but when I am back home, in my own spot, it will be very easy to track me down," he said.

"The last threat means of course I have more discussions with the police to determine how to act and what we are going to do," Johansson, who has refused to apologize for the cartoon, told AFP.

He said he had received police protection and Swedish authorities were analyzing the type to determine who Abdullah al-Omar al-Baghdadi was and if he really existed.

Muslim Council of Sweden chief Helena Rasoulis denounced the threats, saying that Muslim organizations in Sweden were capable of handling the cartoon issue themselves.

"We don't think like that at all. It is criminal to call to kill somebody," said Rasoulis. "It is really unnecessary and it's ugly, especially in the moment of Ramadan," the Muslim holy month.

The Swedish ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Jan Thorell, offered an apology in the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Sept. 11 for the controversy created by the cartoon's publication.

Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt also held talks with envoys from 22 Muslim nations on Sept. 7 in a bid to defuse the row.

The publication of the sketch in Nerikes Allehanda on Aug. 18 – featuring the prophet's head on a dog's body – sparked a fiery debate in the Swedish media on freedom of expression and prompted protests by Muslims in the western town of Örebro, where the newspaper is based.

A strict interpretation of Islam forbids the depiction of Muhammad in any form.

The cartoonist has received previous death threats, while the Swedish foreign ministry has also advised its nationals to exercise caution in the Middle East.

A series of 12 cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad published in Denmark's biggest daily more than a year ago led to riots in several Muslim countries. AFP

# Internal wrangling delays Bush decision on Iran strategy

WASHINGTON – WHILE SEEking later words forward on the debate over troop strength, President Bush also used the occasion to rule up the pressure on Iran, saying his speech on Thursday to review the need to contain Iran as a major reason for the continued US presence in Iraq.

The language in Bush's speech reflected a struggle between factions within his administration over how aggressively to confront Iran. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has been arguing for a continuation of a diplomatic approach, while officials in Vice President Dick Cheney's office advocate a much tougher view that seeks to isolate and contain Iran, and to include greater consideration of a military strike.

Bush's language indicated that the debate, at least for now, might have tilted toward Cheney by portraying the battle with Iran as one for supremacy in the Middle East. Bush warned up the rhetoric another notch, more bellicose, to say, "If we were to let Tehran run of Iraq, extremists of all strains would be emboldened," Bush said. "Iran would benefit from the chaos and would be encouraged in its efforts to gain nuclear weapons and dominate the region."

The state department, which has pushed for a more restrained tone in America's dealings with the world in general, and Iran in particular. Cheney and hard-line hawks in his office, however, have become increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of progress in curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions, where Rice has advocated a diplomatic approach.

Allies of Cheney continue to say publicly that the United States should include regime change in Iran as a viable policy option, and have argued, privately, that the United States encourage Israel to consider a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

The debate between the factions will play out soon in a decision over whether to declare Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, or a unit of it, a terrorist organization and subject to increased financial sanctions.

While some White House officials and some members of the vice president's staff have been pushing to blacklist the entire revolutionary guard, administration officials said, officials at the state and treasury departments are pushing for a narrower approach that would list only the Revolutionary Guard's elite Quds Force, or perhaps, only companies and organizations with financial ties to that group. The designation would make it easier for the United States to block financial accounts and other assets controlled by the group. NYT

# Japan PM favorite vows better China ties, no Yasukuni visits

FUKUDA

TOKYO – YASUO FUKUda, the front runner to be Japan's new prime minister, pledged Sunday to strengthen ties with China and said he would not visit a war shrine seen as a symbol of Tokyo's wartime past.

In a televised, head-to-head debate with his only challenger, Fukuda also suggested taking a softer stance on North Korea and spoke of increasing foreign logistical support for US-led operations in Afghanistan.

Fukuda, a 71-year-old elder of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), is favorite to beat former foreign Minister Yuri Aso and become prime minister. Shinzo Abe, who announced last week that he was stepping down.

Although the contest is officially for the LDP leadership, its majority in the lower house of parliament means whoever wins the party's Sept. 23 vote will become prime minister of the world's second biggest economy.

"China is now aiming at a free market economy. They are making an effort," Fukuda said in the debate.

"We need to cooperate with them," he added, cementing his reputation as a foreign policy dove, particularly on Asia.

Fukuda said he had no plans to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, a memorial which is controversial because the 2.5 million Japanese war dead it honors include World War II war criminals.

"As a prime minister, I think I will have to refrain from making a visit," he said.

Former Premier Junichiro Koizumi, whom Abe succeeded last year, infuriated China and other Asian neighbors who had suffered under Japanese occupation, notably the invasion, by repeatedly visiting the shrine.

Abe, for his part, criticized China for "insufficient explanation" of its growing military spending, which he called a threat in Japan and the region.

"Their transparency [on military spending] is not good enough," he warned, and "makes it conditions create the possibility" of military action. "In that sense, it's a threat."

Meanwhile Fukuda informed Tokyo that some down its current hardline policy on North Korea over its nuclear ambitions and an unresolved dispute over its past abduction of Japanese nationals.

He pointed out that the United States was reversing its tough stance amid early talks between the two countries on plans to remove the communist state from a US blacklist of states that sponsor terrorism.

"It is natural to adjust ourselves to a change in international situations," Fukuda said. "We have to make conversation to some extent. It is possible to change our method."

Japan has taken the hard line in recent years against demanding the North's nuclear programmes, and has imposed economic sanctions, saying it will not help Pyongyang until the kidnapping dispute is resolved.

Separately Fukuda said the ruling coalition may force through legislation to continue logistical support – mainly refueling assistance – for US-led operations in Afghanistan, despite strong opposition resistance.

"They are symbolic activities. We really want to continue them," he said.

He spoke of a "last resort" option of passing the legislation through the lower house review – an unorthodox method allowing the ruling camp to ignore the opposition-dominated upper house.

Aso was initially seen as the front-runner to succeed Abe, but leaders of the party's key factions voiced support for Fukuda at the end of last week as opposition to Aso continued to grow within the party.

Aso criticized party bosses for their tactics in a speech to LDP lawmakers Sunday.

"A hastily-formed agreement should be broken. Hastily-formed groupings will fall apart soon," he said. "We have hatred from history that when we select a leader, we have to listen to people's voice."

Meanwhile Abe, who was hospitalized Thursday suffering from exhaustion and an intestinal disorder, was still under treatment, a hospital official said, adding it was unclear when he could be discharged. AFP


**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Philippine National Committee on Large Dams**

The Philippine National Committee on Large Dams (PNCOLD) in association with the Philippine Waterworks Association Inc. (PWWA) hereby announces the 2007 Technical Convention/Workshop to be held on November 27 and 28, 2007 at MPC Pasay Hall, MPC Building I, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

The event aims to disseminate information on dam operation and safety management and to bring together operators/users development in engineering practices and studies on the technological, environmental, economical and social aspects of dam management. The technical convention/workshop will also include a visit to Angat Dam.

This year's convention theme is **"Role of the State, Private Companies and the Public in Philippine Dam Safety Management"**.

**SCHEDULE:**

| | |
|---|---|
| September 28, 2007 | Deadline for Submission of Technical Papers |
| November 20, 2007 | Deadline for Registration of Participants |
| November 27 & 28, 2007 | Technical Convention Proper |

**ORGANIZED BY:**

The Philippine National Committee on Large Dams (PNCOLD) represents the Philippines in the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD).

**PNCOLD OFFICERS 2006-2008:**

President: **Cyril C. Del Carlo, MPC**
1st Vice President: **Lorenzo R. Jamora, MWSS**
2nd Vice President: **Marciano C. Tugaoen, Jr., NIA**
Secretary: **Ryukichi Kawauchi, ARPC**
Treasurer: **Raymond E. Cunningham, CE CHEC**
Adviser: **Jose U. Jovellanos, EDCOP**

**APPLICATION:**

Interested participants can apply or inquire to:
Mr. Romualdo Ma. T. Badran / Mr. Manuel I. Bautista
PNCOLD Secretariat
National Power Corporation
Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road, Diliman, 1100 Quezon City, Philippines
Tel. Nos. (632) 9213841 local 5098; Telefax (632) 9240236
rbadran@napocor.gov.ph or mibautista@napocor.gov.ph

**REGISTRATION FEE:**

The registration fee which covers registration fee covers convention kit, program proceeding, snacks, lunches, technical tour and attendance to technical sessions are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Php 500.00 | Student |
| Php 750.00 | Members |
| Php 1,000.00 | Non-members |

**PAPER SUBMISSION:**

Please submit technical papers through email to:
Ms. Jennie I. A. Legaspi, Chairperson, Program Committee
jlegaspi@yahoo.com

**LANGUAGE:**

The language of the technical convention will be in English. No translation to other languages will be provided.

**TECHNICAL VISIT:**

Technical visit to the Angat Dam, Philippines, Bulacan

The WORLD

# Bush faces new political battle over Iraq pullout

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush on Sunday faced a new clash with congressional Democrats over the unpopular war in Iraq as Senate Democrats reportedly reached a deal that would allow soldiers to spend more time at home.

"If we were to let defeat out of Iraq, extremists of all strains would be emboldened," Bush said Saturday in his weekly radio address. "Al Qaida would find new recruits and new sanctuaries," he added, naming the extremist network that he blames, along with Iran, for fueling violence in Iraq.

"By contrast, a free Iraq will deny al Qaida a safe haven. It will counter the destructive ambitions of Iran. And it will serve as a partner in the fight against terrorism," he said.

Meanwhile in Washington, thousands of protesters marched from the White House to Congress Saturday, waving placards demanding an end to the war in Iraq, the return of US troops, and the impeachment of Bush.

Organizers said 185 people, including dozens of veterans and activists, were arrested as they crossed police lines. Police put the number of arrests at 109.

Authorities also used pepper spray to disperse the crowd, according to the Act Now to Stop War & End Racism (Answer) coalition, the group that organized the march.

The president announced in a speech on Thursday that the size of the US force in Iraq would decrease by about 21,500 combat troops by mid-2008, with the final 5,700 soldiers leaving Iraq in December. Most of those soldiers had been scheduled to return back to the United States at that time.

Currently 169,000 US troops are in Iraq, up from 130,000 before Bush announced a "surge" of US forces in January.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates, keenly aware that the all-volunteer US military has been stretched thin with repeated deployments, said Friday he hoped US forces in Iraq can be brought down to about 130,000 by the time the next president takes office in January 2009.

The figure could decrease faster if Senate Democrats have their way. A proposal by Democratic Sen. Jim Webb of Virginia—a Vietnam war veteran—is under discussion that would require US troops to spend as much time at home as on their most recent tours overseas before being redeployed.

The proposal is close to winning enough Republican support for approval, The New York Times reported Saturday. AFP

PROTESTORS staged a "sit-in" protest on Capitol Hill on Sept. 15 in Washington. At least 150 protesters were arrested as thousands of demonstrators marched to the Capitol demanding an end to the Iraq war. Carolyn B. Brown

## Sadr's movement pulls out of Iraq Shiite alliance

BAGHDAD—THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT loyal to anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr quit Iraq's ruling Shiite alliance on Saturday, leaving Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's coalition in a precarious position in parliament.

The move further weakens the ruling coalition, which even before the defection had failed to push through laws aimed at reconciling Iraq's warring majority Shiites and minority Sunni Arabs.

AL-SADR AFP/FILE

Maliki's government now enjoys the support of only about half of Iraq's 275 lawmakers, although it could survive with the support of a handful of independent lawmakers.

"The political committee has declared the withdrawal of the Sadr bloc from the (Shiite) alliance because there was no ending indication that the demands of Sadr's bloc were being met," the Sadr movement said in a statement released at a news conference in the holy Shiite city of Najaf.

An adviser to Maliki said the government had no immediate comment.

The decision by Sadr's movement to quit the Shiite Alliance in parliament was not unexpected after the cleric pulled his six ministers from the cabinet in April.

Maliki can still count on the backing of two other Shiite Islamist parties in the two main Kurdish parties in parliament, and so far no party has launched any push for a no-confidence vote in his government.

Sadr was instrumental in getting Maliki, a fellow Shiite, appointed prime minister in May last year.

The political bloc has seized a host of grievances in the past, including Maliki's refusal to set a timetable for the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq.

Sadr, a fiery nationalist whose stronghold in the capital is Baghdad's sprawling Sadr City, led his Mahdi Army militia in two uprisings against US forces in 2004.

Maliki's government has been paralyzed by infighting.

Besides the withdrawal of ministers loyal to Sadr, six cabinet ministers from the main Sunni Arab bloc have also quit.

Speaking to parliament on Monday, Maliki acknowledged that the term "national unity government," used to describe his cabinet had lost its meaning.

Hinting at a long promised overhaul of his cabinet, he said it was time for a "partnership government," but gave no details.

The next day Sadr's movement said it was considering withdrawing from the alliance, accusing it of failing to provide security and real political progress had been inadequate.

On Saturday evening a suicide car bomber killed 18 people and wounded 35 others in southwest Baghdad. Many were queuing outside a bakery to buy bread for the evening Ramadan meal which breaks the day-long fast during the Muslim holy month.

The bombing came on the same day that an al-Qaida-led group, the Islamic State in Iraq, announced a new phase of attacks to mark the month of Ramadan, which started this week. Reuters

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# SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Molmisares Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

- Call him the $10-million man /A34

ASIA EASTERN U's Aldrech Ramos rises over the rebounding Jumbo against UST's Jon Bloot. Article on Page

# Tigers, Tams in KO duel for No. 4 today

By Marang S. Candia

WITH ITS VARSITY BASKETBALL REIGN ON THE LINE, SANTO Tomas thinks with a Far Eastern side it has never gotten close to beating this season as a battle playoff week in the UAAP unfurls today at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Tigers (6-6) and the Tamaraws (5-7) will square off in the 4 p.m. duel for No. 4 spot in a playoff for the Finals berth.

Both teams are coming off losses in their last outings.

The Tigers absorbed a 74-71 heartbreaker to the Red Warriors last Thursday while the Tamaraws succumbed to the Blue Eagles, 83-76, in the same venue.

Today's winner will buy itself a ticket to the Final Four next week.

The Tigers will face the No. 2 ranking and the twice-to-beat privilege against the winner of the playoff between No. 3 and 4.

The Blue Eagles fell to the Mapúa Cardinals, 90-80, in overtime Saturday to pave the way for the Final matchup between the Hawk Birds, which was actually scheduled for Thursday but was moved two days earlier with the availability of the Big Dome.

The winner between the Eagles and the Tigers will face the No. 1 ranking and twice-to-beat privilege against the winner of the playoff between No. 3 and 4.

The Olivarites (Santo Tomas is home of composition, length and the way it plays).

"I don't think that it is right to say that we have [their number]," Pat Enebral, coach Glenn Capacio said after that Thursday win. "My players want to prove to everyone that they belong here."

That was basically what the Tigers did last year when, from out of nowhere, they made the semifinals, defeated top-seeded University of the East twice, and then the Second Almeo Blue Eagles, 2-1, in the title series.

"It was a storied opportunity, definitely," UST coach Odie Saro-nio said Thursday. "We just have to come out a better team now."

Santo Tomas also had to be content to the first round, 61-60.

Meanwhile, Le Sallo's Bruin Red will be asked to issue a public apology to Nba star forward Dirk Pothkhot and the league on top of interpoint suspension.

Red punched Pothkhot in the back of the head on Thursday in Le Sallo's side of the fourth in a game which the Red Nkimon won to accept the championship.

The league's technical committee upheld commissioner Eli Cordero's recommendation of the apology—an unprecedented punishment—but would a longer ban on the Le Sallo player.

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## Finally, a big Pucay payday

GUANGZHOU—Pinoy hopes to extend a night tournament this season. Mon Pucay did had doubled yesterday at the 11-over Asian Tour omnium finished tied for a fifth place in the inaugural Midea China Classic over by Thongchai Wanichkul after a seven-jaughing three-way play-off Sunday.

Pucay closed with a 2-under-par 69 and wound up with a 14-under 268 total that was worth $14,500, a six more than the $7,968 he amassed from picking up the rounds in eight tournaments earlier.

Pucay, ranked a lowly 123 in the US Order of Merit, had earlier rounds of 66-67-66. He started the final day in solo fourth before Korean Bae Ji-hoo tied him with a 67.

Jeeone Uehiyama, was $8,760 after winding up tied for 14th at 273 with a 69, and round of 71. Jeeone Hapmoon also cashed a 69 for a 281 total worth $2,880.

Meanwhile, Frankie Minoza capped a sparkling weekend with a 75 after earlier rounds of 69-69-74 and found himself among the contenders at 287 in the Asia Open in Hokkaido, Japan.

# F'nando nails RP Am

## Tanpinco overwhelms Baraquiel for ladies plum

By Hanang B. Castillo

ILOILO CITY—ANTHONY FERNANDO built a 6-hole bulge in the morning and then cruised to an 8-and-7 victory over an overmatched Mario Labajo to win the 2007 Philippine Amateur championship in one of the most one-sided title duels ever.

FERNANDO: Amateur golf king

The 25-year-old from Zamboanga breaks out of a tight match with his erstwhile rivals from Davao with a birdie on the ninth hole of the 36-hole finale before coming back in the afternoon with the same hot form at the Iloilo Golf and Country Club here.

It was the first victory in the event for Fernando, one of six members of the National pool who parted with as much confidence, especially after intermittent rains softened the greens.

"I guess I just got lucky," said Fernando, a scholar of the Ateneo golf foundation.

The afternoon round was actually just a formality as Fernando had more of the fire he displayed in the morning to join the likes of such great names as Columbio Tagal, among others, in the champion's roster.

Arjay Tanpinco, a veteran international in from nearby Bacolod City, scored a similarly easy 10- and 8- victory over youthful Jonathan Baraquiel in the ladies' final.

Labajo, who took out two RP team members in Jay Bayron and Mark Fernando on the way to the finals, suddenly lapsed into errors after engaging Anthony Fernando in a virtual dead heat after seven holes.

The 16-year-old former bag carry at the Iloilo Golf & Country Course actually won the first hole in the decider before bogey'ing the next five, who last ranked after Labajo birdie on No. 6.

Fernando then knotched in a four-hour for birdie on No. 17 before pouring the last hole of the morning round to put his cushion to six holes.

"It took advantage of his mistakes," said Fernando, who didn't give Labajo the opening in the afternoon by birdieing his first hole from off the green.

Tanpinco, meanwhile, didn't show the ill effects of a slightly injured wrist in pulling off the expected triumph.

Her nine-hole lead after the morning round bodes reading the biggest win of her career with a birdie on No. 8 and a par on the ninth.

Teadita Antonio, the losing finalist last year, and Lora Roberto finished third place in their respective divisions by nipping Iloilo bet Irene Moore and Louise Mendez, 1-up, respectively.

## SMB RP OPEN

# Gabica, Alcano forge title clash

By Marlon Bernardino
Contributor

ANTONIO GABICA CONQUERED rival nemesis Efren "Bata" Reyes, 13-10, yesterday to arrange a showdown with reigning world 9-ball champion Ronnie Alcano for the fourth annual San Miguel Beer (SMB) Philippine Open championship at the Dragon Hall of Silvertip Mall at the Orient Centre.

Alcano, also the pool's world 8-ball titlist, handled out defending champion Francisco "Django" Bustamante, 13-12, in the other semifinal match of the P1.3 million tournament organized by Billy Dignos in partnership with Point Agents.

The two finalists from Negros Promotion were disputing the P500,000 champion's purse in a race to 15 duel at presstime. The runner-up prize is P250,000.

Reyes and Bustamante, who will defend their World Cup doubles title in the Netherlands late this month, settled for P100,000 each as losing semifinalists.

The 35-year-old Gabica, who won the Swiss Games 9-ball gold medal and a silver in the 8-ball event last year in Cebu, strung up three racks from 6-all and stayed on top for good in the race-to-13, afternoon break fight with Reyes.

"Swerte ang (Just lucky)," said Gabica, noting he had so many errors like his rival, who served as one of his sponsors when he married with four some years back.

Gabica is slightly favored in the finals, having earlier beaten Alcano, 9-3, in the preliminaries.

Alcano, Bustamante stopped Reyes, 9-7, on Saturday. Gabica downed Carlo Biado, 9-6, in the losers' bracket to arrange a knockout semifinal date with Reyes.

Alcano also stayed alive in the one-loss side by beating giant killer Pacilio Dayondon, 9-8, to advance against Bustamante.

After Gabica opened a 9-6 lead over Reyes, the man known as "The Magician" in the sport could only move within two racks three times. He had 12-10 before dooming himself with a rough 9-ball shot in the 23rd rack.

Gabica's earlier victims in the 32-man field were 2006 SMB titlist 9-ball Tour leg winner Candy Valle (9-7) and 2007 SEA Interpool zone 9-ball champion Dennis Deasilo (9-0).

# SSC, UE fighters lead junior champs

By Ramon S. Aurelio

SAN SEBASTIAN COLLEGE'S Nelson Virginia and University of the East's battalion John Gaona led the winners yesterday in the junior division of the 2007 Gaeuing Bear of the Best National Taekwondo Championships at Globetrotters Activity Center in Makati City.

Virginia Taekwondo Union, UFC Taekwondo Club of Baguio City and Manila's Central Gym also produced two winners each in the five-day tournament participated in by more than 600 fist who wrote all-gold medalists in previous tournaments.

Virginia bowed Batuan's Wendell Causaren, 8-1, to bag the featherweight medal while the fourth-seed Gaona won the middleweight championship by upping Mayo-nnaise's Joel Nikko Ilagan, 5-4, in the day's last match.

Central Gym's Bellarmine Ulduan, who was ranked 16th, nosed out eighth-seed Elijah Sibamfalan of the Eastern University, 6-5, for the featherweight title while teammate Christine Ferraren overpowered Makilala City's Mary Grace de Asua, 6-0, to take the middleweight women's title.

Featherweight Daphne Mindoro and welterweight Rahiphar Maga produced gold medals for the NTC Tigers. Mindoro overwhelmed Ma'Ayon's Nelsha Balayon, 7-3, while Maga prevailed over Mary Rose Dolot of Negros 7KO, 5-2.

UFC's Bernel Tadeo stopped Davao (Del) Leonardo Serranito in a sudden-death duel after no 8 all score to cop the men's flyweight gold while teammate Patricia Dondasan outdueled the women's flyweight crown over Mary Ann Espino of MTM Covered Seamen, 12-10.

DPC Jaya Master Lauren dodged Lois Aron Nagaid of Silang TKD, 1-1, for the women's flyweight gold.

Pegasus Tz Dwi John Gregson won the men's bantamweight crown Jhemel Allas of SBA, 8-7, while the women's gold went to Althea Allerey of Mentors, an 8-0 victor over Bicol High School's Ferolena Sergidan.

The lightweight women's win throw Heaven Rose Allerey Hilbe Dowd and Karla Jane Abera of Kind High School. David Jesus Jay Angelo Jr. Dog of MTM in sudden death after both pas failed to score while Marquinedoe Dimaculangan of Pegasus scrapped past Marco Antonio Barrera in their rematch in Las Vegas on Dec. 6.

That could assure them would be more than enough boxing experience to showcase to the world during the Games.

But there's another thing Bulusan and his backers must prepare for.

There'll be interested attendees who would check how the Philippines has achieved success, despite the absence of a centralized boxing program supported by government.

For example, how could a country with as boxing connotation to speak of, unlike neighbors Thailand, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea, continue to hit the jackpot in big-time boxing?

* * *

In case you did not notice, the current effort by the government for boxing comes in the form of a rather rare private fellowship by a happy multiweight with the President, for Filipino world champions.

Seeing the world lack of support, Freddie Roach had earlier mounted a call for the RP government to set up several clinics, and possibly a national academy where poor aspirants could enter and pick up the wasted basics of the royal sport.

Pacman knew that veterans call had conveniently been buried in the hurricane over the many triumphs achieved mainly through efforts of private groups and individuals.

But now, those who would bother to dig into the history behind the current story are bound to conclude that RP did everything with a lucky punch.

A new, sensible shot at stardom could be assured if half the money to be squandered in the BSC party is cut with for the more noble task of saving the boxing schools in the hub of poor communities.

The Bowwow Bards would be greatly repaid and relieved that way.

BENJAMIN Sembrano (left) scores on a jumping side kick against Charles Darvin muar-Inacnacki. Sembrano won gold.

# Lucky Philippines should repay Freddie Roach

BARE EYE

Alvaro Fernández

LOS ANGELES—THEY'RE GETTING ready and there's the smile of silver. Soon, the clinking of wine glasses resulting all the way from dear old Manila to the dogged corridor of the Wild Card gym here.

Of course, the famous boxing parlor where the reverend Freddie Roach preaches the profitable inflection of gain doesn't seem to have a moment until next Saturday, first day of fall, when the Manny Pacquiao Foundation returns here.

But it will be a small celebration when the Filipino boxing superhero, after an unprecedented training stint in Cebu City, steps back into the arena where all the great things started for him.

The bigger party will be at the historic Manila Hotel by the bay.

* * *

Based on the prosperous guest list, indeed still by the many known chronicler Nick Giongco, a Wild Card regular being newly trained here, it will be a strictly tuxedo affair the Philippine government will be hosting in November.

The event is the World Boxing Council (WBC) Convention.

It's actually more than just a convention.

Other than the old technical examiners, the most philosophical lecturers, the event is expected to entice to opulence as the attending biggies, led by Don Jose Sulaiman, receive the fabulous Filipino hospitality morning, noon and evening.

On the guest list are Jose Sulaiman, Oscar De La Hoya, Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, and practically all card-bearing members of the world boxing glitterati.

* * *

The affair, by the way, is a brainchild of the happy-go-lucky duo of Giongco and business friend, Eric Buhain, favorite son-in-law of former Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

Buhain had to build a smaller but extra expensive boxing convention in 2006, a sort of dry run with most notices from Asia, to make sure this big one will be a success.

Anyway, Buhain did not say it, but the WBC bash is obviously his way of splurging to thank all those who ran-

Photo by JOSEPH BONIFACIO

somed us here, in the champion's corner.

Lobajo, who took out two RP team members in Jay Bayron and Mark Fernando on the way to the finals, suddenly lapsed into errors after engaging Anthony Fernando in a virtual dead heat after seven holes.

The 16-year-old former bag carry at the Iloilo Golf & Country Course actually won the first hole in the decider before bogey'ing the next five, who last ranked after Labajo birdie on No. 6.

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"It took advantage of his mistakes," said Fernando, who didn't give Labajo the opening in the afternoon by birdieing his first hole from off the green.

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Teadita Antonio, the losing finalist last year, and Lora Roberto finished third place in their respective divisions by nipping Iloilo bet Irene Moore and Louise Mendez, 1-up, respectively.

# Newcomers shock Ucaa champions

NEWCOMER LAS Piñas College came away with a stunning 70-68 thriller over defending champion Emilio Aguinaldo College Generals in the 69th University Athletic Association (Ucaa) men's basketball tournament.

The Blue Lions feasted on the free-throw of their two Nigerian point guards to score their fifth win in nine matches.

Nigerian standout Charles Iroang went for a layup with six sides to go, shattering a 68-all deadlock and sending the Blue Lions to their third straight victory and a share of fourth with the PSBA Jaguars.

The Generals' third straight loss shook the standings, with the Arellano College of Science and Technology Lighthawks standing in second position after they outplayed Universal College of Manning, 88-78.

The solo leading St. Francis of Assisi Jesters (8-1) earlier downed the La Salle Zobel Archers, 78-62, to extend their win run to six.

# Fernandez, other UAAP hotshots join SEA Games squad tryouts

WITH THE COLLEGIATE WARS ALMOST over, the Hubbard Center-sponsored Philippine team will welcome new faces in its push to resume training today at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Ateneo basketball godfather and Barbosa Gastro owner Mikee Romero and executive director of UAAP batsheet Anthony Fernandez, members of the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), will preside over the tryouts.

Romero and Fernandez, who are also members of National University and Ateneo Cabalen of Mandaluyong will give coach Jimmy Alapag enough options as to what kind of a team he will form for the 24th SEA Games slated this December in Thailand.

Although Cabalen and Fernandez are considered as two of the finest shooters in the university circle today, they still to prove their worth against other aspirants, including four PBA rookies, to secure slots in the national squad.

"The SF training pool may has two of the best shooters in the land but they have to go through the process. Not judging their performance in the (Ateneo) Blue Eagles but they have to prove themselves worthy of making it to the team," said Romero.

Unlike Fernandez is a spot shooter, the 6-foot-3 Cabalen is such-and-about kind of a player that makes him more dangerous than the other aspirants in the team.

Cabalen, who plays for Toyota Balintawak in the PBL, is averaging more than 15 points a game for the Dakilanin.

CHAMPS: MBC president and Spring Cooking Oil basketball team owner Nechanicer "Tec" Padilla (sixth from right) turns over to Malabon City Mayor Tito Oreña the trophy won by the Cooking Oil Masters-Maldivas in the recent national inter-city tournament. With them are head coach Elmer "Yong" Garcia and his players. Padilla is helping hunker at the MBC-Spring team that will leave for Taipei on Oct. 3 to compete in the Hua Lien international regatta.

CLAY WINNERS: Commission on Election chair Benjamin Abalos (left) and Wack Wack Golf and Country Club president Luis Tai Bale David Kian Seng Lee, winner of the recent seventh President's Cup, during the awards rites at the clubhouse of the championship venue.

# Air21 not giving up on Jaworski

By Rhoeny R. Carrillo

SEMBOY JAWORSKI WILL MOST PROBABLY accept the NCC1 coaching job in the PBA, hopefully in time for the opening of the coming Philippine Cup.

This was the assessment of a team official, who asked not to be identified, in a talk with the Inquirer yesterday.

"The offer has been on his lap for close to a year now," the source said. "Knowing the [former] senator, if he would decline the offer, it would have been right there and then."

Jaworski has reportedly yet to commit the offer as coach ever before last season's opening.

Team management has yet to extend a mention on the issue but the source said he knows what comes Ben Lina is in close contact with the 64-year-old Jaworski.

The source does not know the exact details of the contract being offered to the chairman but Ben Tayona and Charles Alipoyo, however, established that a lot of business considerations have been thrown in by management.

"The only thing I see that could prevent Jaworski from taking over the team is if a greater calling comes along," said the source.

Jaworski is also expected to bring word for a up position to the Philippine Sports Commission and the commissioner of the PBA.

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TIGER Woods always turns heads with his game. With a round left in the Tour Championship, the one that will draw people's attention is the price money that looks to be going his way. —AP

# Call him the $10-million man

## Europe makes it through rain, seizes Solheim lead

SALTSJÖBADEN, SWEDEN—EUROPE TOOK three points in the weather-delayed fourballs to edge ahead of the United States in the Solheim Cup at Halmstad, Sweden on Sunday.

Laura Davies and Becky Brewerton thrashed rain-hit Beth Bader and Nicole Castrale in the last fourball to be completed to win conditions, giving Europe an 8.5 to 7.5 lead going into the 12 singles.

Europe needs to reach 14.5 points to regain the Cup, while the United States need 13 points to retain it.

In the first two matches, rookie Linda Wessberg and Iben Tinning halved with Paula Creamer and Brittany Lincicome, while Sven Strüver and Trish Johnson halved with Juli Inkster and Cristie Kerr.

Brewerton and Davies beat Gulbis and Castrale, while in the last match, Annika Sorenstam and Samantha Richardson defeated Cindy Rarick and Morgan Pressel, 3 and 2.

"I think the weather maybe suits us. We are more adjustable to bad conditions," said European captain Helen Alfredsson. "But I am so proud of the way my team keeps fighting—they have such great hearts."

Reuters

SPANISH national basketball team players celebrate their victory against Greece. —

## Euro basketb: Spain seals final showdown vs Russia

MADRID—SPAIN WILL PLAY RUSSIA IN Sunday's final of the European basketball Championship.

Pau Gasol scored 23 points and Jose Calderon made some big plays down the stretch as Spain beat defending champion Greece, 82-75, on Saturday.

In the other semifinal match, Andrei Kirilenko scored 20 points and had three blocks as Russia withstood 30 points from Antonios Fotsis to hold off Lithuania, 86-74, and reach its record 13th final.

Most the Titanic Raptors' Jorge Garbajosa his own free throws to give Spain an 80-76 lead with 1:8 seconds to play. Theodoros Papaloukas jumbled to be tied on his drive to the lane. Juan Carlos Navarro, who also finished with 23 points, then hit two free throws at the other end. Calderon, a Raptor guard, scored 18 points.

Vassilis Spanoulis led Greece with 24 points and five assists in the game played before a capacity crowd of 11,500.

"We showed that when we have to fight in difficult moments, we know how to respond," Calderon said.

Calderon stole from Dimitrios Diamantidis with 3:47 to play and made the subsequent layup to push Spain out to a 79-68 lead moments after a two-handed dunk by Gasol.

Calderon hit two free throws to make it 81-70 moments later.

Spain reached its sixth final in the last seven years. Only the Unified Team of Russia, the successor to the Soviet Union, has more appearances in the championship with 14.

Spain coached its sixth final in the last seven years. Only the Unified Team of Russia, the successor to the Soviet Union, has more appearances in the championship with 14.

Spain coached its sixth final in the last seven years. Only the Unified Team of Russia, the successor to the Soviet Union, has more appearances in the championship with 14.

AP

## Alonso confident of McLaren support despite spying 'proof'

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, BELGIUM—FORmula One world champion Fernando Alonso expects McLaren to continue backing his title push despite his role in spreading lies and evidence against the team in a spying controversy.

"I am not concerned," the Spaniard said on Saturday after qualifying in third place and ahead of team-mate and championship leader Lewis Hamilton on the Belgian Grand Prix.

"I'm fully convinced and totally happy with how the team behaved in this situation," said Alonso, who is three points behind Hamilton with four races remaining.

McLaren were stripped of their 2007 constructors' points and fined $100 million on Thursday for having Ferrari technical information in their possession.

Alonso's comments came after International Automobile Federation (FIA) President Max Mosley penned the 26-year-old for providing key evidence to condemn McLaren.

"[Michael Alonso ve sentido]. have known what had happened," the Gazzetta dello Sport MM-site quoted him as telling reporters.

Kimi Raikkonen and Felipe Massa qualified 1-2 for Ferrari.

Reuters

## Tiger takes 3-shot edge to final round

ATLANTA—TIGER WOODS NEVER liked tournaments where birdies were required simply to keep up. He managed just five Saturday at the US Tour Championship, where a 6-under 64 only allowed him to keep his three-shot margin at the penultimate lineup at East Lake.

Even after a week of low scoring because of soft, slow greens, the third round was puzzling.

Zach Johnson flirted with a 59 until he hit into a bunker on the par-3 16th hole and had to settle for a par and a course record 60. Mark Calcavecchia shot 63 and nearly jacked up one shot on the world's No. 1 player.

Woods was smiling and laughing from the par-5 15th fairway as Calcavecchia made eagle to join him atop the leaderboard, but that didn't last long. Woods birdied his next two holes, and missed a 5-foot birdie on the 72nd hole that put him at 19-under 193.

It was the lowest 54-hole start to Woods's career, and it left him pointed to win at East Lake for the first time. Woods has never lost a professional tournament when leading by more than one shot going into the final round.

As for the FedEx Cup?

Phil Mickelson still has a mathematical chance, but the odds are about the same as winning the lottery without buying a ticket. Lefty's only hope was winning the Tour Championship and having Woods finish lower than second by himself. Mickelson shot 70 and was 13 shots behind, assuming he doesn't shoot 58 on Sunday, the $10 million goes into Woods' retirement account.

### Tournament record

All that remains, even if Woods doesn't win his seventh tournament of the year, is how low the scores will go Sunday. The tournament record is 17-under 263, set by Stat Hyatt two years ago.

"If you made a bunch of pars, you were going to get run over, as it was nice to make some birdies and get out there and still maintain the same shot lead I had starting out the day," Woody said. "You see the rounds today—60, 62—and guys were taking it deep."

Unfortunately, was briefly tied after making an 18-foot eagle on No. 10, but he missed the 3½% fairway and had to lay up short of the green, and he failed to birdie the last two holes.

He will play with Woods for the first time in the final pairing, although it's quite a consolation prize.

Calcavecchia, at 47 the oldest player in the 30-man field, had become accustomed to the four-week stretch of the PGA Tour Playoffs that he was in last place and tied off as a single in the final round of his last two events. When he finished at Cog Hill on Sunday, he assessed his chances at East Lake this way:

"Somebody is going to finish first and somebody is going to finish 30th, and I know who the favorite is for that."

Even playing in the final group doesn't change his outlook on the first part of that equation.

"If I play like I did today, I'll have a lot of fun, even if it's not enough," Calcavecchia said. "You'll probably keep me relaxed to some degree a little bit, but it's a round of golf with Tiger Woods. It's where you want to be."

AP

# Negros tanker creates big POF ripples

By Jun Navarro

MINI-YEAR-OLD Jun Mar Ereñena churns his way to the 400m gold.

| Medal Tally | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | G | S | B | T |
| Iloilo Province | 23 | 14 | 15 | 226 |
| Iloilo City | 20 | 45 | 45 | 144 |
| Negros Occ. | 07 | 19 | 11 | 61 |
| Capiz | 21 | 17 | 13 | 61 |
| Antique | 10 | 10 | 20 | 12 |
| Negros Or. | 02 | 3 | 3 | 24 |
| Bacolod City | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Cebu | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Aklan | 2 | 5 | 6 | 13 |
| Guimaras | 1 | 3 | 3 | 7 |

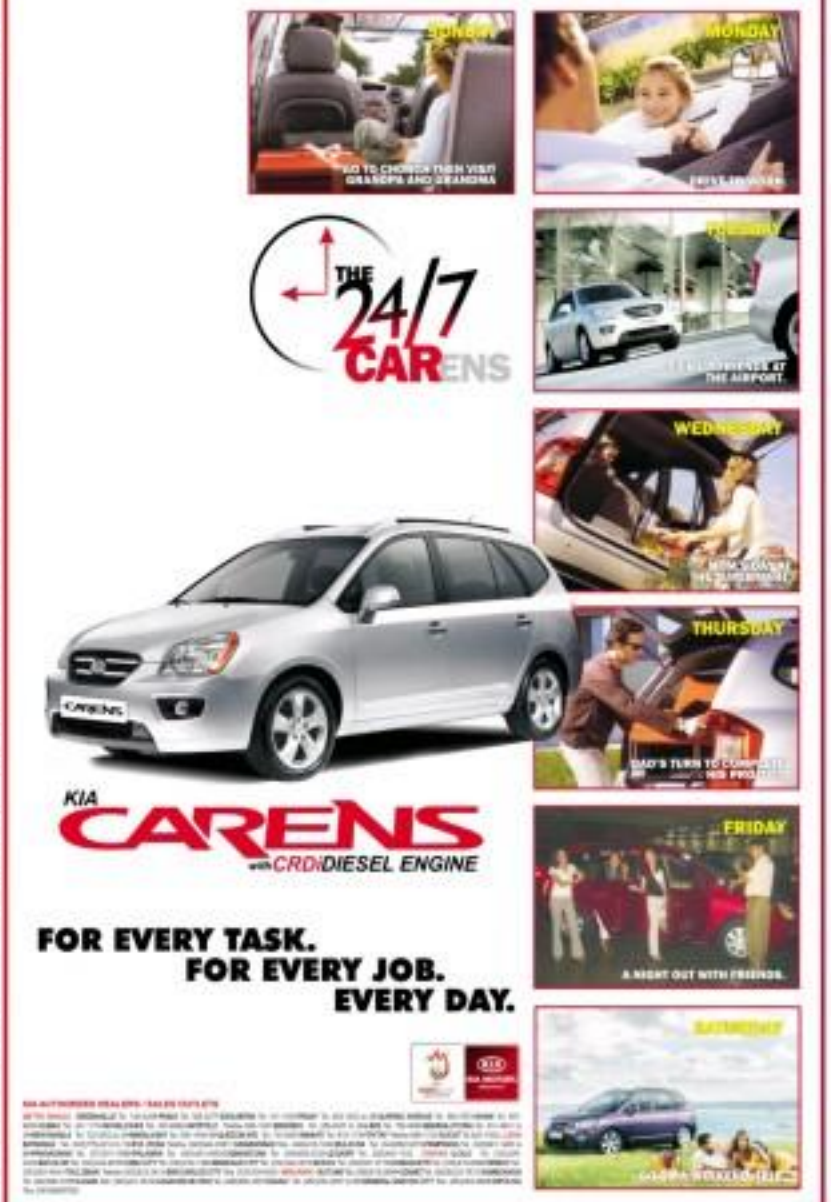
## SPORTS WATCH

### Forum tackles boxing rewards

### PCAP 5-stag derby kicks off

### SJC stag series gets under way

### PSG stagfest round 2 today



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# SPORTS

CHEERFEST! Who says the UP Pep Squad has nothing to cheer about? The dismal record of its men's basketball team notwithstanding, the UP cheerdancers show off their false form on the way to a narrow victory over the Family General University of Santo Tomas Salinggawi Dance Troupe, 92-88, 82-78, in yesterday's UAAP Cheering Competition. UP's victory snapped UST's five-year stranglehold on the annual event.


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MILO LEGAZPI LEG

# Veteran runners prevail

LEGAZPI CITY—A SON OF A SARI-SARI store owner from Catbalogan has used a formula shaped by his mother's devotion to win the Legazpi City leg of the 31st National Milo elimination race that started and ended in front of City Hall yesterday.

Rio de la Cruz, who was born in Bato town and now resides in Mobo City, won the men's 21-kilometer race in 1 hour, 13 minutes and 10 seconds while Joan Mirasol dominated her division in 1:33:32.

The winners qualified to the grand finals on Nov. 18 in Manila along with the runners-up and champions.

It was a big comeback for De la Cruz, who failed in his first try last year, placing ninth overall in the Visayas Regional elimination topped by Jolino Sermona, who eventually won the national finals.

Mario Magbuno, a native of Pilar, Sorsogon, and a third year physical education student at Aurel University, came in second in 1:01:09 nearly 57 (:08 with Gilbert Binday clocking in third in 1:15:34 for P1,500.

Mirasol, a physical education student at University of the East who stopped her studies this year due to financial problem, found little resistance in beating her rivals.

It will be the second trip to the Finals for Mirasol, who placed fourth in 2005 in Lake Kawayan in the Negros Occ'ng last year.

In the 5K race, Rolando Amolaves won in 16:07 while Arnajane Mariaga prevailed in the distaff side in 24:14.

About 4,500 runners, 200 coming from the Philippine National Police, answered the starting gun fired at 5 a.m. by Gov. Joey Salceda and assisted by Milo Events executive director Pat Gee Ong, Legazpi Mayor Noel Rosal Ragpal off the 5K and 3K runners.

San Pablo City in Laguna will host the Bombo the 15th stop of the 22 elimination races in this year's schedule.


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MINAMI

MILO ALL STUDENTS MEETFEST

Tennis prodigy Chan Takeyuri of San Beda-Taytay retrieves a forehand during a tie match against a Jose Rizal University player in the recent 2007 Milo All Students Tennis Championships. SBC-Taytay, also rosters of eventual MVP Jesse Patrocinio, Kevin Hernandez and Angelo Antonio, event won a long (for high schoolboys' event) with 2-1 victories over JRU and Ateneo, while Taiwan Magnayon Manila stamped its class in the girls' division. Mary Gonzales and MVP Jr Custodio powered BFA-Manila to the title with wins over Perpetual (2-0), San Beda-Taytay (2-0), and Assumption (2-1).

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# BUSINESS

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HP Business Notebook
HCS COMPUTER SYSTEMS, INC.

**ECONOMIC TEAM** The Arroyo administration's economic managers pose for a group photo after the Philippine Economic Briefing in Makati last week where they highlighted the country's economic stability arising from strong fiscal and economic reforms. The government's main challenge is how to contain the budget deficit within the ceiling for 2007 given the slippages in tax collections from a lackluster performance of Universal Petroleum and of Customs in the first semester. From left: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr., Trade and Industry Secretary Peter B. Favila, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Director General Augusto B. Santos.

## Oil price surge worries BSP

### Notes threat to inflation

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has expressed concern over the potential pressures on consumer prices that can be caused by skyrocketing oil prices.

Analysts said these concerns—on top of risks from the severe dry spell earlier this year—would increase the probability that the central bank would keep its interest rates steady during its next monetary policy-setting meeting in October even as the US Federal Reserve is widely expected to cut its own rates this week.

"It is quite clear that the outlook on inflation

OIL PRICES /B4

CURRENCIES

$1 = P46.20 ▲ 0.1

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

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AS LOW AS ₱250 OFFICE EQUIPMENT'S REPAIR ALL BRANDS, ALL MODELS 15% DISCOUNT FAX REPAIR

# SPV cleanup a success, but borrowers left hurting

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By Dianne L. Lucas

MANUEL "MANOLING" MONIATO is in a fighting mood.

The colorful public personality is party owner of a the fitness zone Bon Voyeur's Aztec Hotel in Makati City, which now faces the prospect of falling under the control of foreign owners after the hotel's creditor bank sold its obligation to so-called "vulture funds" more than two years ago.

Moniato's group secured a P600 million loan from Landbank of the Philippines during the administration of former President Fidel V. Ramos for a hotel project.

Difficulties with repayment made Landbank sell the loan at a steep discount. If their new creditors are to have their way, Moniato and his business associate now owe them as much as P1.3 billion, including penalties and interest.

He is now assailing the Special Purpose Vehicle Act—the 2002 law which facilitated the disposal of banks' control loans and idle assets—officials of his company's creditor, Landbank, its shell holding company called the Philippine Opportunity for Growth and Investment (Pogi) and a court-appointed receiver for IT ventures Inc., the company that owns the hotel.

The man who once ran for President described the scheme being imposed on IT Ventures as a "forced takeover" where local shareholders "will lose controlling interest in their corporations."

"This is a corporate raid," he said in an interview, expressing his resentment that the move on the hotel was being made by the foreign investors of Pogi "to suffocate" with the reserve of his company.

"If we agree to their plan, it would result in our ownership being diluted to only 11 percent [of the company] while foreign enterprises will own 89 percent of IT Ventures," he said. "This is a violation of the Constitution."

## Another P100B in disposals seen

### Bad asset cleanup

His story is a familiar one in the world of borrowers and lenders.

Since the SPV Law was enacted five years ago, banks have sold off their nonperforming receivables in bulk to asset management companies that were, in turn, bought by foreign investors who specialize in bad asset recovery.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), P97 billion worth of bad assets were sold off under the first incarnation of the SPV Law, while another P72 billion has so far been moved to shell firms like LandBank's Pogi under the revised SPV Law.

"I bet we will see another P100 billion worth of asset disposals via the part 2 of the SPV Law," BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla said in an interview.

The prospect of more bad asset disposals is good news for the central bank.

For years, regulators have been erring unconvincibly to coax banks into leasing more loans which, in turn, spur economic activity when the money is used for capital investments or consumption. Before the SPV Law, their success was limited.

As of end-June in 2005, the local banking system was bubbled with close to P686 billion in nonperforming assets and sound loans. Banks simply had no money to lend since much of their assets were tied up in illiquid foreclosed collateral.

Yesterday, the banking system is "healthier now," Espenilla said.

But good news for regulators may be bad news for borrowers like Moniato.

Espenilla, who was the central

SPV LAW ▶ B4

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## Competing creditors

"WE MAY ALL WELL BENEFIT FROM MEDIUM-term donor competition," writes an official from the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Centre, the exclusive "club" of notably donor countries. He was referring to the way China has been aggressively pushing loans in Africa and other parts of the developing world—and how the traditional donors are watching China's moves with concern.

### Appreciation vs apprehension

Last week, we described how China's loans being extended to Africa, Latin America and Asia are being met with both appreciation and apprehension. The appreciation obviously comes primarily from the loan recipients. The apprehension mostly comes from competing donors, especially the traditional Western donors and multilateral funding agencies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. As we explained last week, the Chinese loans have features that make them preferred by borrowing countries, and the competing donors are understandably jealous. One has to look at the broader picture in order to obtain an objective view of the situation.

Recent allegations of massive graft and corruption surrounding the ZTE National Broadband Network project have tended to cast concessional loans from the Chinese government in a bad light lately. The problem partly arises out of the fact that the loans from China are "tied," designating specific Chinese firms as suppliers of commodities and services involved in the projects funded by the loans.

### Tied aid

More traditional donors now limit tied aid to grants, but not loans. Largely due to the chance of loan recipient countries themselves, donors have increasingly provided for international competitive bidding for their loan assistance.

In the earlier days, not a few people were uncomfortable with how foreign-funded facilities like school buildings and training centers were built entirely with materials and supplies from the donor country, all the way down to the light bulbs, screws and nails. In the case of one senior Cabinet official in the Visayas I had visited, I was surprised to learn that even the gravel used to fill in the water was shipped in from overseas. Many of the foreign-funded buildings were seen to be over-engineered for our standards; some claimed that we could have built two or more similar buildings with the same amount of money, if built to our own minimum standards and using our own materials.

NO FREE LUNCH

Carlito P. Mallari

### Aid and trade

It is easy enough to understand why donor countries would want to tie their aid. Ironically, after all, bad donor habits entrench themselves in recipients. Aside from underlying political motivations, donor governments see their aid as a means for helping strengthen their own economies by opening investment and trade opportunities for their own private sector. A Media study in the late '80s estimated that for every dollar of aid given by the United States, about 60 cents actually flowed back to the donor country because of tied aid.

Still, such tied foreign-funded projects opened the way for newcomer foreign firms to enter the domestic economy in "difficult" developing country, often leading to partnerships with domestic firms, and leading on to more subsequent trade and investment linkages going in both directions and benefiting both sides.

### Beggars don't choose

It is also easy to scoff at the criticisms that donors are entitled to tie their grants to donor-country suppliers. After all, beggars cannot be choosers, as the saying goes.

But loans, it is argued, are a different matter. Since loans have to be repaid, they still involve the same cost of taxpayers' money, bolstering the argument that the borrowing country must be entitled to explore various options to get the best value for its money. Thus, international competitive bidding has increasingly become the norm, especially for the more expensive loans from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. On the other hand, for highly concessional loans from bilateral donors like Japan, UK, Germany and now China—where low interest rates and long repayment terms are equivalent to a grant component—there is more justification for tying the aid, at least partly.

### Domestic ties

It is therefore not entirely out of line that China's loans being granted all over the developing world are tied loans. As the newcomer on the donor block, China is merely doing what the older donors had been doing early on, and in some cases, continue to do. One might even argue that the requirement for Chinese firms may not be so objec-

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# Banks' property loans rise 3.8% to ₱218B

By Doris C. Dumlao

BOOST PROPERTY PRICES, BEWILDERING a decade after the Asian currency crisis, Philippine banks are becoming more confident to increase their exposure in the real estate sector, whether in the form of loans backed by property assets or securities issued by property developers.

Real estate exposure of commercial banks grew 3.8 percent to ₱218 billion in the second quarter from a year ago as real estate-backed loans increased by ₱7.7 billion, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported on Friday.

Compared to a quarter ago, total exposure also expanded by about 2.8 percent from the ₱208 billion in real estate loaned and assets in third books as of end-March. During the same period, banks' investments in securities issued by real estate companies grew by ₱300 million.

The majority or 86.3 percent of total real estate loans were held by the bank proper, while the remaining 3.5 percent represented assets managed by their trust departments.

"The expansion was driven mainly by the bank proper, where several banks posted net increases in their real estate loans during the quarter, mostly due to new loan releases to property developers," the BSP reported.

The industry's combined real estate loans grew by 4.2 percent to P182.2 billion from P184.5 billion in the previous quarter. As a result, the ratio of real estate loans to total loan portfolio, excluding interbank loans, rose to 11.5 percent from the previous quarter's 10.6 percent.

Real estate loans granted for the construction and development of real estate for commercial purposes including industrial estate projects accounted for 81.2 percent or ₱156.3 billion of the total while the remaining 18.8 percent or ₱36 billion were granted for the acquisition of real estate by individual homeowners, the borrowers.

There was likewise some improvement in terms of assets backed by real estate.

Past due real estate loans fell by 9.6 percent to ₱18.1 billion from the previous quarter's ₱20 billion.

"The improvement was mainly due to the sale of delinquent loans to SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) as well as repayments, restructuring and foreclosure efforts," the BSP said. (See related story on Page B2.)

The extended SPV Law, which will expire in April next year, waives some of the taxes and reduced fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets, to

BANKS on

# Alliance Global joins tourism bandwagon

By Elizabeth Sarabia Lanuza

ALLIANCE GLOBAL GROUP INC., the holding firm of property magnate Andrew Tan, is venturing into the high-growth tourism business.

AGI president Kingson Sian said the company expected the tourism sector, which still has a few players in the listed scene, to contribute 20-25 percent to overall revenues over the next three to four years.

Today, about 60 percent of the group's revenues come from its property business through Megaworld Corp., which AGI holds a 56 percent stake.

As it enters the tourism sector, AGI is also eyeing a foray into the food and beauty manufacturing sectors to contribute more to AGI's total revenues in the future, thus reducing Megaworld's contribution to about 20-30 percent.

Sian said AGI was still studying possible locations for tourism projects although he said that the Tan group owns a 35-hectare property in Mactan, Cebu, which may be developed partly for a tourism project.

The company envisions participants of the 98 spins middle-class, prioritize have increased from

## Eyes dev't of 15-ha lot in Mactan

the and ex-other businesses to last food and beauty manufacturing sectors to contribute more to AGI's total revenues in the future, thus reducing Megaworld's contribution to about 20-30 percent.

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The company envisions participants of the 98 spins middle-class, prioritize have increased from

past buying a house and buying a car or commuting.

Megaworld is also closing a deal with the government for the purchase of the 14.5-hectare old Bolo airport in Mandaluyong, Iloilo City, for P1.23 billion in cash.

Sian, however, did not comment on whether this will be part of AGI's tourism prospects.

Megaworld had said that upon acceptance of its offer and the closing of the deal, the company would apply with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) for a special economic zone license for a project that aims to transform the old Iloilo airport into a new business district.

Megaworld envisions its project to lure major business process outsourcing (BPO) companies interested to set up shop in the Visayas region.

In addition to office buildings for the BPO industry, the project will host educational facilities geared to provide value-added training to equip prospective employees with the necessary skills suited to the requirements of the call centers and other BPO businesses that will be based in the Megaworld project.

# Cautious trade seen ahead of Fed meeting

INVESTORS ARE EXPECTED to closely track Wall Street ahead of a federal Reserve policy meeting on Sept. 18 but may expect to positive interest rate cuts to boost a slowing US economy, brokers said.

"I think the mood of the market will generally be dictated upon by the statement of the Fed during the FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting. The markets are discounting a rate cut but in anticipation for doing so will be key," said Custodio Ilao, president at Globestar Inc.

Many an Wall Street report a cut and are debating whether it will be a quarter percentage point or a half percentage point. The federal Reserve has kept its benchmark fed funds rate unchanged at 5.25 percent for more than year after a string of increases and has not cut rates since 2003.

An interest cut in the US typically weakens the dollar and lends strength to other currencies like the peso, analysts said.

First Metro Investments Corp. vice president Eduardo Banzuig Jr. added that markets have discounted a 25 basis point cut in the forthcoming fed meeting but not a 50 basis point cut, which could propel global stock markets up.

The peso is likely to move will persist until analysts get a firmer hold of (corporate) third quarter profits in October," Banzuig said.

Fund managers said the surge in oil prices has been driven by speculators as they instead focus on a surprise cut by the US fed.

World crude jumped the once cluster $80 mark three times in the last three days, closing above that level last Thursday before the close.

Last Friday, light sweet crude for October delivery fell 99 cents to settle at $78. It is listed on the New York Mercantile Exchange after rising earlier to $80.37 a barrel, a record high.

"The market will likely track the Dow Jones Industrial Index as investors will have to discount the adverse impact of rising crude oil prices as it reached all-time highs," said Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management Philippines Jasmin Jimenez

## Banks' property loans . . .

From page B1

encourage banks to clean up those bad assets that piled up during the Asian crisis. It also urges the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and 2-VAT (expanded value added tax) and reduced the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent.

Thus, the ratio of soured real estate loans to total loans eased to 8.4 percent from the previous month's 10.6 percent. The ratio was likewise an improvement from the year-ago ratio of 13.3 percent.

Maybank

# No free lunch

From page B1

ninnable if one considers that Chinese goods and services have tended to be cheaper...the reason, precisely why China has become the virtual factory of the world.

If there is graft and corruption surrounding certain projects funded by these bilateral loans [and Chinese loans have by no means been unique on this], it is not the government loans per se that are more to wait of, but the commercial transactions that they fund. Tax-sifters, unholy deals between corrupt domestic officials and foreign supplier firms too eager to bag a lucrative contract spell of heavier ensued public investments.

Competition is good, even among our creditors. In the end, the responsibility is ours alone, to ensure that the loans we obtain from our competing creditors truly redound to the greatest good for the greatest number of Filipinos.

Comments welcome at chabo@philnews.com.

# Ford to export 50,000th car in October

By Ramon W. Dacriaga

FORD MOTOR CO. PHILIPPINES expects to ship out its 50,000th unit manufactured at its Sta. Rosa facility as the company expects an average of 10,000 units of completely built-up vehicles a year.

Ford president Richard Baker told the business media staff that FMCP was approaching the milestone as the firm maintained its strength as the country's only exporter of CBUs.

The company, which also owns the Sta. Rosa Transit, complements the Ford Escape, Ford Focus, Mazda 3 and Mazda Tribute in its facility in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The vehicles are shipped out to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

The same model's latest consignment is the export of the Ford Focus to Thailand starting 2005.

This was part of an additional investments of $18 million in 2005 that enabled FMPC to expand its Sta. Rosa plant in preparation for the production of the Focus and Mazda 3 under its New Car program.

FPMC is the only participant in the government's automotive export program that is actually exporting.

It started with about 3,000 units in 2002, reaching an annual high of 13,000 in 2005.

When pressed for details, Baker said the company now preferred to give out data as each year ended.

In previous years, FMPC shared assembly sales data with the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, even though it is not a member of the group.

Last year, then FMPC president Henry T. Co said the firm expected minimal growth of export volumes amid a slowdown observed in the Southeast Asian markets.

Also last year, company officials announced an investment of P1.1 billion to enable the Sta. Rosa plant to manufacture so-called flex fuel engines or those that can run on either pure or blended gasoline.

They said the Sta. Rosa facility would turn out 100,000 units of flex-fuel engines over the next five years valued at about $100 million.

FORD vehicles are shipped out to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

## Petron gets P12-M grant from the US

By Abigail L. Ho

INDUSTRY LEADER PETRON Corp. has secured a P12-million grant from the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) to improve its oil spill response capabilities.

Under the agreement, Petron's operations and facilities will be assessed to identify what else it needs in terms of equipment as well as strengthen its overall emergency plans.

"We appreciate the strong support of the USTDA as we continue to bolster our in-house oil spill response capabilities," Petron president Nestor Al Ichiyo said in a statement.

Since 1997, the USTDA has been partially funding some of Petron's project studies.

One project study undertaken in 2001 was for the engineering design of refinery units, which were commissioned in May 2005.

According to Petron, these two units were the major components of its $300-million investments to produce fuels that comply with the Clean Air Act.

The USTDA also funded the basic engineering design study for Petron's HDS unit, which would produce high-value petrochemicals upon commissioning in the fourth quarter of 2008.

Petron said the latest study on oil spill response would further boost the company's capabilities to respond to such accidents, while having safety and efficiency across its supply chain.

The oil firm is currently the only company with Philippine Coast Guard-approved oil spill contingency plans for its refinery, depots and terminals.

Early this year, Petron joined Oil Spill Response and East Asia Response Ltd., the largest oil spill preparedness and response organization in the world.

This membership complements the oil firm's in-house oil spill response capability, enabling it to call upon world-class resources for prompt and guaranteed response in oil spills of any size.

"We will continue to adopt the latest technologies, equipment and procedures to ensure that we operate in a manner that protects the health and safety of all our stakeholders. We believe that this is essential to the long-term sustainability of our business," Al Ichiyo said.

## RP, New Zealand start air talks

By Rica T. Dimsodero

THE PHILIPPINES AND NEW ZEALAND have started negotiations for an air services agreement or ASA.

The highlights of the emerging ASA include a grant of reciprocal rights for New Zealand and Philippine carriers to operate both passenger and cargo flights at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Clark.

The ASA is also expected to establish rights for Auckland-Manila passenger flights.

Members of the air panel and the two governments made considerable progress in two days of negotiations last Sept. 6 and 7 at the New Zealand Ministry of Transport (MOT) headquarters in Wellington, New Zealand.

The negotiating panel for the Philippines was composed of officials of the Civil Aeronautics Board, Philippine Airlines and Clark International Airport Corp., led by Department of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin.

The New Zealand negotiating panel was headed by MOT Principal Advisor for Air Services Julia McAfree and was composed of officials of the MOT and flag carrier Air New Zealand.

The talks deadlocked, however, on such issues as third-country code sharing.

"The Philippines has no problem with code sharing, as long as it is bilateral. We think that third-country rights are thrown in," CAB deputy executive director Perrenia P. Perezmenia said due to access.

The governments expect to hold a second round of negotiations within three to six months' time, possibly in December 2007, to complete the key agreements.

In the meantime, domestic consultations are ongoing on remaining issues.

## SPV cleanup a success, but borrowers left hurting

To see page B2

bank's point man in lobbying for the SPV Law, explained that the dispute between TF Ventures, its asset-appointed receiver and the company's new set of creditors is emblematic of Deutsche Bank AG and Cargill Financial Services International was not entirely unexpected.

### Survival vs recovery

"In many cases, the borrowers have a conflict now with the banks," he said. "Sometimes, lenders-buyer who are bought their loans from the banks). But they have more difficulty when the loans are transferred to new creditors who are experts at bad asset recovery."

Moreno said his partners stress, however, that their bond remains was a viable business that is capable of meeting all its obligations with just a little more elbow room from creditors.

They vow to see the court-appointed receiver, Bernardo Bernardo, whose recommendations, he believes, are skewed in favor of Pegi and its foreign principals.

"Our recommendations are even more generous to Pegi than Pegi's own report," said Moreno's business partner Tim Norman Reuter. "We were left replaced with someone who is more fair."

TF Ventures has now petitioned the court to replace Bernardo with another receiver whom they believe would ensure the company "fares equitably"—a common complaint that has taken years to resolve in other similar cases.

Meanwhile, emboldened by the apparent success of its case with Pegi, Landbank is preparing to sell off another P4 billion worth of bad assets in the fourth quarter of this year.

The plan represents more good news for SPV's liquidity, who stresses the importance of a stable and liquid banking system. But it is bad news for troubled borrowers like TF Ventures, who must now face hardnosed asset recovery experts.

"We are not fighting for our survival," Benker said.

## Oil price surge worries BSP

To see page B2

that continues to be benign and the risks continue to moderate because you have monetary growth remaining at below 20 percent," BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Gonzalez said.

Excess money supply tends to exert upward pressure on the prices of basic goods as consumers are usually tempted to spend more when they have more cash in their pockets.

"But oil prices are becoming a concern," Gonzalez said, noting the rise in prices to about $72 a barrel for the benchmark Brent crude.

Oil crude oil traded above a record $80 a barrel last week as a hurricane devastated refineries in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Definitely it will have an impact on inflation, not immediately in September because they set components and [the] base inventory," Gonzalez said.

The impact of the recent surge in oil prices, he said, would likely be felt starting October.

"Of course, what we're hoping is to happen is that with the decision of Opec (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) to pump more, there could be some room for stabilization," Gonzalez said.

"But there's a downside risk with it because there's going to be a hurricane in Texas. And then, of course there's still continuing risk in Iraq," he said.

Across the globe, investors are avoiding assets from emerging markets like the Philippines, given the seeming credit crunch in the United States due to rising delinquencies in subprime mortgages.

The US Fed, which has given assurance that it will protect the US economy from recession, is thus expected to cut rates by at least 25 basis points this week to help ease the credit crunch.

In the case of the Philippines, Gonzalez said the BSP was expected to maintain the country's annual inflation rate this year below 3.1 percent despite the upsurge in oil prices and the adverse impact of the peso-dollar exchange rate on farm output.

# Fortune urges DOF to amend Pall Mall decision

By Michelle V. Rosca

FORTUNE TOBACCO CORP. has asked the Department of Finance to reconsider its decision to boost the excise tax on Pall Mall cigarettes produced by its competitor, British American Tobacco (BAT).

In a letter to Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Fortune president Antonio Abaya refuted the complaint earlier raised by Philip Morris that lowering the excise tax was prohibited by the Sin Tax Law of 2005.

Because imported Pall Mall cigarettes were already taxed at P26.00 a pack at the time these were still sold in duty-free shops, then the excise tax should be kept at that level and not brought down to P6.74 a pack.

BAT argued, however, that the importation of Pall Mall ended last last year and that the P6.74 excise tax already applied to its locally produced cigarettes.

BAT added that Pall Mall produced here has been in the market since 2004, even before duty-free shops imported the cigarette brand, so the tax rate on domestically produced cigarettes should apply.

But Fortune said the move of the DOF to lower the excise tax rate on Pall Mall would defeat one of the objectives of the Sin Tax Law, which was to prevent firms from going around tax laws.

"Since tax laws are intended to cover future situations, in the event that Pall Mall cigarette brands are again imported and brought to the Philippines for sale, what then would its excise tax classification and rate be?" Fortune said.

Under the Sin Tax Law, the higher the cigarette price, the higher the excise tax, but since a cigarette is classified under a certain tax rate, the rate should no longer be reduced even if prices change in the future.

"Simply put, the law seeks to prevent hedging or circumventing market forces whereby manufacturers and importers would deeply suffer the loss in the short term and await the final classification to be issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and thereafter opt on getting in, increase retail prices and enjoy its profits at the expense of the government, to effect a tax subsidy sanctioned by law, clearly not the intent and purpose of RA 9334 (the Sin Tax Law)," Fortune said.

The BIR issued a ruling last year raising the excise tax on Pall Mall cigarettes to P26 a pack from P6.74, saying the higher tax rate should apply because Pall Mall cigarettes were being imported at the time.

BAT, however, appealed the BIR's decision with the DOF, the BIR's mother agency, on grounds that domestically produced Pall Mall were introduced in the market even before imported ones were sold in duty-free shops.

The DOF upon approval by Undersecretary Gandhi Sandoval, ruled with BAT and kept Pall Mall's excise tax rate at P6.74 per pack.

Jose Mario Bawag, who was internal revenue commissioner at the time the BIR issued for an increase in the tax on Pall Mall, reacted against the DOF's decision. He reiterated the Sin Tax Law's provision against downward classification of excise tax.

'NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT'

# RP land not for sale to China, Yap says

By Amy R. Remo

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY Arthur C. Yap assured the public that the Philippine government was not selling its land to China.

In a Rajahan forum held at the Subic Hotel last week, Yap clarified that of the 18 contracts, only four were signed by the Department of Agriculture.

"These contracts are meant to strengthen the agriculture sector and are not connected in any procurement of Philippine lands," he explained.

The controversial RP-China deals were made in January this year during the Asean Leaders' Summit, where the two governments signed agreements covering biofuel, agribusiness and fishery sectors.

"These deals are framework agreements and can possibly bring in more investments in the country. We are not selling anything to any foreigners," Yap explained.

He assured the public that there was nothing to worry about these agreements.

"Six conferences want to investigate this issue and there is no problem if they want to see the documents since these have all been made public," Yap said.

Eugenio Lis, JAFo China desk officer, earlier said these deals were agreements for these Chinese companies to come in the Philippines and invest in the agriculture sector.

"We are not putting the country's resources in the hands of a monopoly power such as China. As we did to other foreign investors, we are only facilitating the entry," Yap said.

Yap earlier said that these agreements were similar to what the government did when it asked the Japanese to come in the Philippines and put up their car plants here, or when it asked foreign investors to put up cell towers and telecoms.

He also stressed that these investments would be beneficial to the farmers because these would increase the pace of infrastructure development in the agriculture sector.

Consequently, this could increase productivity and generate more jobs in the countryside.

Yap also clarified that these agreements were "private sector contracts" and that the government land not released money nor entered any bonds.

"These JAFo-China business deals are not 'unconstitutional' or 'insane.' It's a great way to develop agriculture especially since there have not been too many investments given to this sector," Yap said.


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Seminar on Advanced Financial Statement Analysis and Financial Reporting Issues

September 29 and October 6, 2007 (Saturdays)

The migration by Philippine companies to International Accounting Standards has significantly increased the volume and complexity of financial reporting issues. This seminar aims to enhance the ability of financial statement users to identify critical information in financial statements and to do a deeper and more thorough analysis of specific material financial statement accounts. It is designed for analysts who want to go beyond ratio analysis in assessing a firm's financial health and prospects and for those who need to analyze the financial performance of Philippine banks, mining, and holding companies.

The seminar covers the financial analysis of selected industries: financial institutions, mining and holding companies.

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# PNOC-EDC to take over four more BOT plants

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT Corp., a subsidiary of the Philippine National Oil Co., will take over on Sept. 23 the operation of four geothermal power plants in Leyte that are under build-operate-transfer contracts with Green Leyte Co. Ltd.

The four facilities are the Mahanagdong A and B Topping Cycle Plants and Binding Cycle Plants. The plants, which have a combined installed capacity of 55 megawatts (MW).

The plants all use geothermal energy from PNOC-EDC's Leyte Geothermal Production Field (LGPF).

According to PNOC-EDC, geothermal fluids go to the separation plants either before they are directed to the main power plants (referred to as "topping") or after being diverted to the main power plants (called "bottoming") for additional electrical output.

The Tongonan 1, Malitbog and Mahanagdong A and B plants provide power to the National Power Corp. for distribution to Cebu, through the Leyte-Cebu interconnection project, and to Luzon through the Leyte-Luzon interconnection project.

The four plants are the only power under BOT contracts that PNOC-EDC has yet to take over.

Last this July, PNOC-EDC assumed the operation of the 232.5-MW Mahiao and 180-MW Mahanagdong geothermal power plants from Unioil Philippines Ltd. after the 20-year cooperation period under the plants' respective energy conversion agreements ended.

Last year, PNOC-EDC took over the operation of the 132-MW Upper Mahiao power plant, also from Unioil.

The Leyte Optimization Plants, together with the Upper Mahiao, Mahiao and Mahanagdong facilities, all are steam from the LGPF.

The LGPF is PNOC-EDC's biggest steam field, powering nearly 60 percent of the company's total installed capacity.

PNOC-EDC is the country's largest geothermal energy producer, with an installed capacity of 1,108 MW, or 60 percent of the country's total installed geothermal generating capacity.

# Microsoft taps Clark firm

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—Microsoft owner Bill Gates has tapped Japanese firm SMK Electronics Corp. here to make a component for a new product that Microsoft is developing, an SMK official said.

Hiroki Kuyama Hosoya, SMK general administration manager, said "Magsan Central Luzon" head Angelo Lopez Jr., who is also Clark Development Corp. public relations chief, first broke these SMK for two reasons.

Those are the "capability of the firm to produce the receiver blades for [Microsoft and the 60 optics craftsmanship needed to manufacture the software system."

CDC, the zone corporation managing the development of this former United States military air base, said that SMK is one of the top 20 Japanese electronics companies in the world and is one of the top 10 exporting firms in Clark.

It makes and assembles touch panel glass display, keyboard, remote control and other related electronic products.

The SMK in Clark makes the cosmetic, charger and bluetooth devices for Nokia.

The value of products it exported out of the zone as of June this year totaled more than $6 million, CDC reports said.

Clark is now home to 58 semiconductor and electronic firms, which have committed more than P5.07 billion in investments.

The CDC enterprise operations and monitoring department said Clark exported $1.16 billion worth of products last year.

At least $790 million or 68 percent of the amount was contributed by information technology (IT) firms.


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# BSP to acquire ₱40B in fresh capital

## Gov't plans to issue peso-denominated bonds to raise fund

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS, currently reeling from huge foreign exchange losses, will soon get P40 billion in fresh capital in a single transfer through a crossover funding scheme that will not strain the national government's finances.

Under the scheme, the government will issue P40 billion worth of 10-year peso-denominated bonds and remit all proceeds to the BSP. Later, the government will create a special purpose trust (SPT) entity that shall hold up the funds needed to pay bondholders when the securities mature in 10 years.

According to sources in the government, officials will sign a multi-year obligation to remit P4 billion each year to the SPT. To grow the funds, the money in the SPT will, in turn, be invested in various instruments.

In effect, the SPT will become a self-liquidating entity whose only role is to prepare the money to pay off the P40 billion bond issue.

"At the end of 10 years, you have money set aside to pay for the maturing bond," one source said.

The source declined to say exactly when they plan to float the bonds, but he said the scheme has not been included in the 2008 budget. The government is expected to infuse the capital in the BSP in 2008.

"It's okay because in 2008, the government intends to enjoy some fat dividends, while in 2008, there's already going to be a surplus," the source said.

Since last year, the BSP's profitability has been under pressure due to losses incurred with the peso's sharp appreciation against the dollar, as well as the high cost of mopping up excess liquidity from the strong inflow of foreign funds, particularly remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

The P40 billion capital infusion is seen to bolster the BSP's capacity to provide monetary stability.

Based on the latest consolidated BSP income statement, the institution incurred P213.76 billion in net losses in the first semester, mainly due to P91.83 billion worth of foreign exchange losses.

## *IT boom has come and gone, study says*

By Elizabeth Sandine Lacson

LABOR FIRMS THAT HAVE HAILED the global information technology outsourcing boom and have just developing countries such as India and the Philippines as investors' safest services are getting to be picky, according to a recent study.

"We do believe that the boom years for IT outsourcing growth have come and gone," said Brian Semperowitz in statement. "Buyers are learning to be more selective and strategic in the way they approach outsourcing and, as such, the pace of growth is slowing."

Semperowitz is co-author of the 2006 Global IT Outsourcing Study conducted by Diamond Management and Technology Consultants (DMTC), a Chicago-based IT management consulting firm.

DMTC's study reveals that buyers are still pressured by continuing contracts, and questioning the value of outsourcing. They are also struggling with the basics of determining what to outsource, measuring effectiveness and managing a global pool of resources.

The study further revealed that buyers are becoming more selective and strategic in the way they approach outsourcing decisions, which is slowing the buying process.

Buyers are concerned about outsourcer reorganizations, executives and key subcontractors with additional outsourcing opportunities.

In 2006, 9 percent of offshore buyers said they plan to decrease their levels of outsourcing over the next 12 months. This is compared to DMTC's previous study in 2006 in which none of the buyers said they would decrease the amount of outsourcing they were doing.

Firms are winning in outsourcing for three reasons: either they are "deliberately outsourcers" a process or function that is core to their business and are now bringing those back in; their provider overpromised and under delivered; or, the complexity of managing and measuring outsourcing projects and related paybacks overwhelmed the buyer.

This however does not signal the death knell for IT outsourcing.

DMTC said the industry is alive and will continue to grow well into to the future, although at a slower pace.

The pace of growth has declined significantly over the past several years. In 2004, 56 percent of all buyers told DMTC that they were going to increase their level of offshore outsourcing—albeit at a slower pace than in years past. By 2005, that number had slipped to 38 percent and today sits at an all-time low of 9 percent.

The good news is, overall, the percentage of buyers satisfied with their IT outsourcing decisions remains quite high, with 71 percent of buyers saying they were happy with their offshore providers. In 2005, the offshore satisfaction rate was only 62 percent.

The study polled hundreds of senior executives mainly based in the United States and Europe and studied industry trends over the past 12 months in the areas of spending, buyer satisfaction, outsourcing impact and leadership of the changing outsourcing market.

Semperowitz is arriving in Manila to present a preview of global outsourcing trends and strategies for 2007 at the Makati Shangri-La starting on Oct. 2.

## WESM operator urges ERC to reverse ruling

By Abigail L. Ho

DESPITE TO AVERT A POSSIBLE P2.60-PER-kilowatt-hour increase in consumer power rates in Luzon, the Philippine Electricity Market Corp., operator of the wholesale electricity spot market, is urging the Energy Regulatory Commission to reverse a recent ruling regarding prices at the electricity bourse in September and October last year.

The original WESM settlement prices in September and October 2006 were decreased by the National Power Corp. in favoring the original settlement prices, Napocor based its decision on the time of use (TOU) rates.

But the ERC later restored the prices to their original high figures, which prompted the PEMC to file a motion for reconsideration last Friday.

In its motion, the PEMC urged the ERC to reconsider its Aug. 14 decision, saying the recalibrated prices would only burden consumers. It said power buyers at the electricity bourse would be forced to pass on to their customers the additional costs brought on by the increase in settlement prices in September and October 2006.

"Considering that the implementation of the questioned decision would surely have a huge impact on the consumers, there is a need to immediately suspend the effectivity of the said decision until after the ... commission has resolved the instant motion for reconsideration," PEMC said.

# Teves steps in to resolve opposing CTPL proposals

By Michelle V. Rarus

FINANCE SECRETARY MARGARITO Teves said soon may turn the fray over the compulsory third-party liability (CTPL) and work out a compromise between the motorists insurance industry and the regulatory agencies.

Teves said he would schedule a meeting this week with Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, representatives of the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association Inc. (PIRA), Insurance Commissioner Eduardo Malinias and other parties concerned.

During the proposed meeting, Teves hopes that all parties will get to thrash out their differences over the CTPL problem and agree on a solution.

The conflict stems from a proposal for the Government Service Insurance System to become the sole provider of CTPL insurance, and eliminate the multiple sale of false insurance policies to vehicle owners. The Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) backs the GSIS proposal.

The Insurance Commission, which it was still under Evangeline Euvidilo, opposed the GSIS model, saying it would displace mobile insurance firms from the CTPL business. The Insurance Commission, however, seemed to stand when Euvidilo was sacked and replaced by Yolando Mallari.

The insurance firms, represented by PIA, also opposed the GSIS model, saying that a monopoly was unconstitutional. PIA added that thousands of CTPL brokers would lose their jobs.

PIA is fought the matter to the Makati City Regional Trial Court, which last month issued a preliminary injunction on the DOTC's order to implement the GSIS model. The government meanwhile implemented a so-called "interim solution" that was earlier agreed upon by the DOTC and insurance firms.

Pira said in an earlier statement that the interim solution had resulted in the decrease in sale of false insurance policies. Pira added that there was no need for the Insurance Commission to insist on implementing the GSIS model to address fraudulent activities.

But Malinias had said he found the GSIS model to be superior to addressing fraud. He added the commission would immediately implement the GSIS model once the road decides in its favor.

# DA plans avian flu fund from gamefowl revenues

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE is considering the possibility of setting up an Avian Influenza defense fund from poultry gaming revenues.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said on Friday that the DA was looking into the idea of tapping the P56-billion gamefowl industry as a possible source of funds to contain the dreaded bird flu.

DA is already in talks with the National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders to put the proposal into action.

The 40 defense fund will be used to further strengthen efforts of the DA and the Bureau of Animal Industry to keep the country free from bird flu.

With the country as the only bird flu–free country in Southeast Asia, Yap said local poultry raisers and growers were in a position to expand their export markets.

Yap explained that Singapore and Brunei could not be considered free of the dreaded Avian Influenza, because they do not have poultry industries to speak of.

Gamefowl breeders, along with the whole poultry sector, would directly benefit from the AI funds, which would be used for various programs such as disease containment and prevention and cure procedures.

Currently, the BA is setting up three more AI diagnostic laboratories in the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Cebu and Zamboanga.

These subnational laboratories, once completed, will complement the ongoing work being done at the Regional Avian Influenza Diagnostic Laboratory in Pampanga, the country's first diagnostic facility that can promptly detect the AI virus.

As for cure, the DA is banking on the quick turnaround planting program to help increase production yields and lower the cost of poultry feed.

Corn, is a major ingredient in animal feeds.

Yap said he had ordered the BAI and Livestock Development Council to look into doubling a compensation and insurance program, which can be an incentive for raisers and producers who would voluntarily report any outbreaks.

The insurance can also be used for poultry losses that will be hit by any disease or virus.

Yap added that the DA had sought partnerships with local governments for the prompt detection of any disease outbreak.


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ETHANOL INVESTMENT Ronnie Ong (2nd from left), president & CEO of PPC International Corp. (PPCIC), signs an agency agreement with Sandy Hao (2nd from right), managing Director of SCL-HECO, a Chinese equipment manufacturer.

October 2007 Course Offerings

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(BY JOSIAH GO)

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## HYUNDAI WINS FOUR AUTOPACIFIC 2007 IDEAL VEHICLE AWARDS

### SONATA, ELANTRA, TUCSON AND ENTOURAGE EARN TOP CATEGORY HONORS

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif., 09/05/2007 Automotive research and consulting firm AutoPacific announced today that Hyundai has won the 2007 Ideal Vehicle Award in four product segments:

- Most Ideal Premium Mid-Size Car: Hyundai Sonata
- Most Ideal Compact Car: Hyundai Elantra
- Most Ideal Compact Crossover SUV: Hyundai Tucson
- Most Ideal Minivan: Hyundai Entourage

"Hyundai Tucson also took home the Vehicle Satisfaction Award.

AutoPacific's second annual Ideal Vehicle Awards (VIA) ranked auto manufacturers for how closely their 2007 model year cars or trucks came to matching owners' expectations and criteria. The vehicles that customers said they would change the least were considered the most "ideal." Measurements for the award include consumer trust, anticipation, expectations and reality.

"Hyundai has done an outstanding job understanding their target buyers and is creating the product that is 'ideal' for its buyers," said AutoPacific's President, George Peterson.

"These awards are a reflection of Hyundai's continued commitment to our customers," said John Krafcik, vice president, Product Development and Strategic Planning, Hyundai Motor America. "The Hyundai brand stands for industry-leading quality, superior standard safety technology, and great value – with these values we'll continue to work hard to meet the expectations of our customers."

To determine the winners, AutoPacific asked owners to rate their new car or truck on how close it came to "ideal" in the following areas: exterior size, passenger roominess, cargo space, driver's seat comfort, driver's seat visibility, interior technology, power ease-of-getting in and out, interior storage compartments, and tires and wheels. The IVA ratings reflect input from buyers of new vehicles purchased from September 2006 through December 2006. Over 24,000 respondents provided input for these awards.

### AUTOPACIFIC

AutoPacific is a future-oriented automotive marketing and product consulting firm. Every year it publishes a wide variety of syndicated studies for the automotive industry. The firm also conducts extensive proprietary research and consulting for auto manufacturers, distributors, marketers and suppliers worldwide. Additional information can be found at www.autopacific.com.

### HYUNDAI MOTOR AMERICA

Hyundai Motor America, headquartered in Fountain Valley, Calif., is a subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Company of Korea. Hyundai cars and sport utility vehicles are distributed throughout the United States by Hyundai Motor America and are sold and serviced by more than 750 Hyundai dealerships nationwide.

Republic of the Philippines
**ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE SALE OF VARIOUS SUB-TRANSMISSION LINES/ASSETS WITHIN THE FRANCHISE AREA OF NIMANIS OCCIDENTAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (NOCELCO)

ERC CASE NO. 2006-458 MC

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO),
Applicant.

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on August 13, 2007, the National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO) filed an application for the approval of the sale of its various sub-transmission lines/assets within the franchise area of Nimanis Occidental Electric Cooperative (NOCELCO).

The Commission has set the application for initial hearing and pre-trial conference on **October 1, 2007 (Monday) at three o'clock in the afternoon (3:00 P.M.)** at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements of the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding (continuing); (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and a concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that he furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish a copy of the application to any person who requests for the same, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

**WITNESS**, the Honorable, **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and Honorable Commissioners, **RALY A. TAN, ALEJANDRO J. BARIN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA, and JOSE C. REYES**, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 14th day of August, 2007 at Pasig City.

ATTY. FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director III

Republic of the Philippines
**ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE SALE OF VARIOUS SUB-TRANSMISSION LINES/ASSETS WITHIN THE FRANCHISE AREA OF DAVAO DEL SUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (DASURECO)

ERC CASE NO. 2006-457 MC

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO),
Applicant.

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on August 13, 2007, the National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO) filed an application for the approval of the sale of its various sub-transmission lines/assets within the franchise area of Davao del Sur Electric Cooperative, Inc. (DASURECO).

The Commission has set the application for the initial hearing and pre-trial conference on **October 1, 2007 (Monday) at three o'clock in the afternoon (3:00 P.M.)** at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City.

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements of the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

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**WITNESS**, the Honorable, **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and Honorable Commissioners, **RALY A. TAN, ALEJANDRO J. BARIN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA, and JOSE C. REYES**, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 14th day of August, 2007 at Pasig City.

ATTY. FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director III


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## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

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(Bid & Re-Bid and Negotiated Re-Bid)
(Item: Appropriations and ABC: 3 Batches/Lots/Appropriations)

1. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, through the duly constituted Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), intends to apply the sum of Twenty Seven Million Three Hundred Fifty Nine Thousand Two Hundred Pesos (₱27,359,200.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Supply and Delivery of Hospital Equipment (Bid & Re-Bid and Negotiated Re-Bid). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.
2. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL now invites bids for the above Supply and Delivery of Hospital Equipment (Bid & Re-Bid and Negotiated Re-Bid). Delivery of the Equipment is required within 30 calendar days after the receipt of Notice to Proceed. Bidders should have completed, within the last three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly in Section II (Instructions to Bidders).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pre-qualification criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183. Prices and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall be required to submit the following documents within five (5) calendar days from receipt of notice from the BAC that it has the LCB: (a) Valid and current Mayor's/Business Permit; (b) Valid and current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License and Registration for the Category, Size and Type of the contract as required in the Bidding Documents; (c) Audited Financial Statements stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions for the preceding calendar year which should not be earlier than two (2) years from the deadline for the submission and receipt of bids; (d) Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) computation; (e) Tax Clearance per Executive Order 398, Series of 2005, as finally reviewed and approved by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR); and (f) Latest Income/Business Tax Returns filed and paid through the BIR Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS). Failure to submit any of the post-qualification requirements on time may result in the forfeiture of the bid security. The contract shall then be awarded to the next Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB). Bidders should submit their bids on or before the last day of the bid submission deadline.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Bidding Documents are available for viewing free of charge.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address given below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos (₱1,000.00) for the Bidding Documents. The Bidding Documents may also be acquired by interested bidders on the above stated date upon payment of the applicable fee. The Bidding Documents shall be provided personally to the bidder or authorized representative upon presentation of proper identification.
6. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL will submit the Bid Documents to any prospective bidder upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents pursuant to Section 7.1 of the IRR of RA 9184 in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (₱5,000.00).
7. Bids are eligible participants must be delivered on the GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, Bids and Awards Committee Office, Barangay 76, Zone 8, Tacloban City on or before 10:00 A.M. of October 15, 2007. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following forms: (1) a bid bond in the amount of two percent (2%) of the ABC; (2) a cashier's/manager's check issued by a universal or commercial bank in the amount of five percent (5%) of the ABC; or (3) a surety bond callable upon demand issued by a surety or insurance company duly certified by the Insurance Commission as authorized to issue such surety bond in the amount of thirty percent (30%) of the ABC. Bid Security shall be valid for one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the date of the opening of bids. Failure to submit a Bid Security in the proper form, amount, and validity period will result in the rejection of the bid.

| Form of Bid Security | Minimum Amount in "1 of Approved Budget for the Contract" in the Bid |
|---|---|
| 1. Cash/Manager's Check | Five percent (5%) |
| 2. Bid Bond | Two percent (2%) |
| 3. Surety Bond | Thirty percent (30%) |

8. Bid opening shall be at the following schedule and place at the BAC Conference Room, Governor Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital, Barangay 76, Zone 8, Tacloban City. All bidders or their duly authorized representatives may choose to witness the bid opening.

| Date | Category |
|---|---|
| October 15, 2007 | Drugs and Medicine Supplies |
| October 15, 2007 | Medical Equipment |
| | Non-Medical Equipment |
| October 22, 2007 | Laboratory Supplies |
| October 29, 2007 | Physical Therapy Supplies |
| | Dental Supplies |
| October 30, 2007 | X-ray Supplies |
| | Medical Gases |
| | Medical Gases Supplies |
| October 31, 2007 | Blood Bank Supplies |
| | Anesthesia Supplies |
| | Hemodialysis Supplies |
| November 5, 2007 | Ophthalmic Supplies |
| | Engineering Supplies |

9. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award without incurring any liability to affected bidders or obligation to inform affected bidders of the grounds for such action.

(Atty.) ROMEO C. JEREZ
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(Atty.) JEAN A. VICTORIO
BAC Member


Republic of the Philippines
**PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY**
Pasay Reclamation Area, Pasay City

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Project Name: **CONSTRUCTION OF BREAKWATER AND REVETMENT PROJECT (BRPC IV-2006)**
Location: Engineering Island, North of South Harbor, Port Area, Manila
Brief Description: **CONSTRUCTION OF BREAKWATER AND REVETMENT PROJECT**
Engineering Island, North of South Harbor, Port Area, Manila
The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Construction of Breakwater and Revetment Project (BRPC IV-2006).
To apply for eligibility and to bid for the Construction of Breakwater and Revetment Project (BRPC IV-2006), interested contractors must submit the following documents to the BAC Secretariat, Philippine Reclamation Authority, Pasay Reclamation Area, Pasay City:
1. Duly accomplished Application for Eligibility and Bid Form;
2. Valid and current Mayor's/Business Permit;
3. Valid and current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License and Registration for the Category, Size and Type of the contract as required in the Bidding Documents;
4. Audited Financial Statements stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions for the preceding calendar year which should not be earlier than two (2) years from the deadline for the submission and receipt of bids;
5. Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) computation;
6. Tax Clearance per Executive Order 398, Series of 2005, as finally reviewed and approved by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR); and
7. Latest Income/Business Tax Returns filed and paid through the BIR Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS).
Failure to submit any of the post-qualification requirements on time may result in the forfeiture of the bid security. The contract shall then be awarded to the next Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB). Bidders should submit their bids on or before the last day of the bid submission deadline.
Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least fifty (50) of the ABC (prospective) being the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.
All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).
The complete schedule of activities is as follows:

| Activities | Schedule |
|---|---|
| 1. Issuance of Bid Documents | September 10 to 24, 2007 |
| 2. Pre-Bid Conference | September 14, 2007 at 1:30 PM |
| 3. Opening of Bids | October 08, 2007 at 1:30 PM |
| 4. Bid Evaluation | October 08 to 09, 2007 |
| 5. Post-Qualification | October 10 to November 12, 2007 |
| 6. Notice of Award | November 13, 2007 |

All documents will be available only at prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount in Php 2,000.00 to the Cashier (CRD-II).

(Sgd.) PRISCILLA S. ARANCON
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee
(PRA Resolution 2012-5, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
**PHILIPPINE RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE**
Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
**PRI No. 2007-009**

Philippine Rice Research Institute (PRRI), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all duly registered contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

Name of Project: Procurement of Janitorial and Other Related Services
Location: Philippine Rice Research Institute (PRRI), Maligaya, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija
Brief Description: 32 utility personnel for PRRI HO and its service offices
Approved Budget for the Contract: ₱ 7,680,000.00
Bid Documents Available: Php 1,000.00
Contact Person: Ms. Cristina D. Ibañez
Delivery Period: 365 days after issuance of Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC (prospective) being the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

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(Sgd.) PRISCILLA S. ARANCON
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee
(PRA Resolution 2012-5, 2007)

BUYING



**More Classified Ads**

National Power Corporation
A29
CB Richard Ellis
B13
RSG Honeycomb
B13
Susana Mejia
B13



**07 URBAN ESCAPADE**
10 HOURS
P1,000
WITH DRIVER
09274949100

ROLEX
JEWELRY
HEADSTRIPS

*Message of Thanks*

*The family of the late*

**ILUMINADA SUPAN PANLILIO**

*who joined our heavenly father, on September 8, 2007*

*expresses their heartfelt gratitude and wish for God's blessing to those who visited, condoled, kept vigil, offered Masses, flowers, donations, Mass cards and attended the funeral rites.*

*Special thanks to the Chona Abadesa and Couples for Christ for their songs and prayers.*

**MANUEL HICARTE MATEOS, SR.**

Formerly Assistant Principal of La Salle Greenhills

*Tenderly joined our Creator and his loving wife* ***Consuelo de Vera Mateos*** *at 10:20 p.m. on 14 September 2007 at the age of 82.*

He shall be missed by his dearest children **Aurora, Sylvia & Billy, Manny, Mike & Elicia, Mel & Jun, Elvira;** grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives & friends.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels & Crematorium, Makati City.

**For your Classified Ads**

HEAD OFFICE
847-8888
loc. 514, 516
892-0000 887-2000
897-9435 (Telefax)

CEBU
932-8888 loc 71
(4444756)

DAVAO
082-8888 221-4000
911-4333

ILOILO
888-8888 337-3300

BACOLOD
888-8888 435-0000

Our Beloved **Mama Fely**

*Felipa Bautista Geslani*

**of Baguio City and Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan**
**(May 1, 1933 – September 16, 2007)**

*peacefully joined her Creator at the age of 82.*

She joins her late husband **Dr. Gaston "Gas" Geslani** and is survived by her children and spouses:
**Tess** & **Manny Quintos** (†), **Evyang, Marcelle** & **Frederic Galindo, Philip** & **Jessica Agustin, Pinky** & **James Sandoval, Lisa** & **Gino Jalandoni**; her grandchildren, **Gaston** & **Rachel, Nelson** & **Iris** and **Chiney Quintos, Sarah, Sandy, Sammy** and **Sabrina Galindo, Kitty** and **James Sandoval, Anya, Darrel, Meg** and **Sam** & **Cate Sandoval, Chino, Cody** and **Kirby Jalandoni**; her great-granddaughter, **Renee Quintos.**

Her body lies in state at the family residence in Baguio City. Interment will be on September 23, 2007, Saturday. We request no flowers, wreaths and floral offerings. Only for her eternal happiness in heaven.

*Beloved Husband and Father*

**GLENN B. GOTANCO**

Beloved son of the late Atty. Leonardo Gotanco and Mrs. Lourdes Gotanco, died on September 15, 2007 at the age of 53.

He is also the Brother and Children Avalon Marie, Gillian, Craig, and Warren, relatives and friends. Request the flower, instead, to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

His remains lie in state at the Memorial Homes of Antipolo, Sta. Rosa, Antipolo, Rizal.

Interment will be on September 20, 2007 at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque at 9:30 a.m. after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

**PETRONILA LIMUN EVANGELISTA**

(nanay/lola/auntie/ninang)

(Formerly of Cubao, Quezon City)

(Retired Accountant, Philippine Airlines)

(Member, Couples for Christ)

(Member, Order of the Knights of Rizal)

(Member, Order of the Knights of Columbus)

(Member, Order of the Knights of Malta)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Land)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Eucharist)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Trinity)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Spirit)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Ghost)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Father)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Mother)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Son)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Daughter)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Brother)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Sister)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Aunt)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Uncle)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Cousin)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Nephew)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Niece)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Grandparent)

(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Great-grandparent)

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(Member, Order of the Knights of the Holy Great-

# Sensational. Ultra stylish. Versatile.

What better words to describe the pride of owning an SUV as distinguished and styled as a Hyundai in its full glory.

## TUCSON

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BUSINESS Monday

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/business
Editor Margie Quiniquini-Bupitin

# 'Sari-sari' stores get shot in the arm

By Dexter L. Luzas

THE COUNTRY'S informal neighborhood store industry has been on a steady decline in recent years.

In urban areas, in particular, the so-called *sari-sari* stores have slowly been giving way to chains of gleaming 24-hour convenience stores.

Recently, however, a group that seeks to improve the power of microfinancing has sought to inject new life into this industry that has long been, for better or for worse, the icon of Filipino entrepreneurial drive.

Enter Microventures Inc., a self-described social business enterprise...and its first "social investment," the Hapinoy project, a means to increase the sales and profits of microenterprises *sari-sari* store owners.

Hapinoy Stores are branded *sari-sari* stores owned and run by microentrepreneurs and built on the backbone of the microfinance industry. Supported by the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Hapinoy is a nationwide initiative involving available microfinancing institutions in different areas of the country.

"What we're doing is linking microfinance institutions with the business world so that we could empower economically and socially challenged Filipinos," said Microventures chairperson Isabel Lopa.

He explained that the initiative is an offshoot of the advocacy of former President Corazon Aquino who has long been a supporter of microfinance as a way of alleviating poverty, among the vast city's poor.

Currently, a pilot project is ongoing in southern Luzon and is targeting 6,000 Hapinoy stores owned by "microentrepreneurs" of the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Inc. (CARD), the largest financing institution in the Philippines, by assets.

CARD is a logical jump-off point for the project, especially since the microfinance institution already has 398,000 borrowers, a significant number of whom are engaged in the *sari-sari* store business.

"Microventures entered the Hapinoy project in an effort to empower *sari-sari* stores by helping them qualify as partner product manufacturers, through capacity-building and through the community support generated by the campaign," said its president Jhoda Inigue A. Aquino IV.

"In a nutshell, Hapinoy *sari-sari* store owners are able to get higher margins on their goods sold, save on new efficiency measures and have the opportunity to get into new businesses that can increase their earning potential," he added.

In practice, Hapinoy Stores pool all their supply requirements into bulk purchases from manufacturers and suppliers. Because of this, Hapinoy Store operators are able to make more profit and, sharing this with Microventures, as well.

"What we're hoping to create is a sustainable business model, and not just one which will create donor fatigue," Lopa said. "We really have an umbilical cord mind set."

According to the group's managing director, Mark Joaquin Bala, the project also aims to widen the country's middle class, by targeting their efforts toward the least-privileged members of society—hopefully transforming the social distribution picture from the current triangle-shaped diagram to a diamond-shaped figure with a wide and stable midsection—all through empowering the poorest of the poor to help themselves.

Microventures further described the project as an initiative which "aims to further develop the entrepreneurial spirit in our fellow Filipinos."

"The project advances the spirit of entrepreneurship, where it is needed the most," Aquino said. "Through Hapinoy, the aim is to help our fellow countrymen by guiding them in improving their current business and getting them the opportunity to get into further businesses."

Since its launch, some 1,000 *sari-sari* stores, mostly in southern Luzon, have been transformed into Hapinoy Stores. Microventures officials said that the group's eventual aim is to have 100,000 Hapinoy Stores across the archipelago in two years.

"Our goal is to help reach microentrepreneurs, to help each of our service (markets), improve their lives and their livelihood through this endeavor," Aquino added. "We hope that by being a part of the Hapinoy community, our members will be given new opportunities for themselves and for their families."

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MICRONENTURES hopes to get more of the country's top manufacturers to join the program.

THE GRAND plan is to have 100,000 Hapinoy Stores set up across the Philippines in two years.

By banding together, store owners can bargain for lower prices

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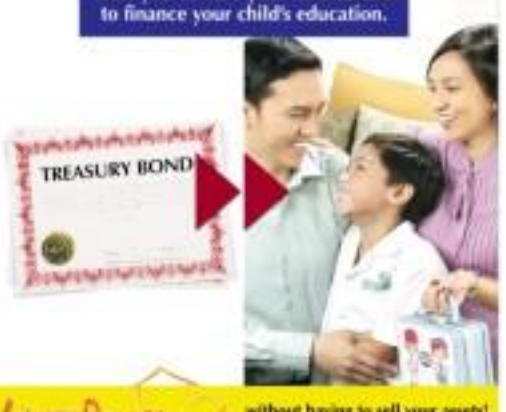


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# Tourist arrivals peak in Bicol

By Jane Bucardas jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

ALBAY, home of the 2,47 Cameron Mayon Volcano, is still a favorite among foreign tourists visiting Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—IN THE FIRST SIX months this year, the number of tourists who came to visit Bicol rose by 37 percent compared to last year's record in the same period, according to tourist statistics from the Department of Tourism (DOT) regional office.

Translated into earnings, there is data in the pocket from January to June totaled over P203 million in gross receipts.

Centralized statistics showed a consistent increase in foreign tourists visiting Camarines Sur since the full operation of the Camarines Norte-Sports Complex (CNSC) in 2005.

Rob Ivan, Dona Antonio in June, the number of foreign tourists dramatically increased to 19,224 from 9,068 during the same period last year.

Albay province, formerly the top gross earner, now ranks third in 40-percent growth from last year's record of 31,049 to 44,348 board arrivals this year for the same period.

But Albay surpassed by 1,227 individuals the record of Camarines Sur's foreign arrivals of 20,401 individuals during the survey period.

Camarines Sur made a remarkable improvement in tourist arrivals, posting a 44.3-percent increase with 23,504 tourists paying a visit.

The DOT attributed the increase to the growing popularity of Caramoan's fine beaches and surfing spots, which were made accessible with the introduction of air-conditioned medium ferry services that link the province to mainland Bicol through the Albay-Camarines-Sur route.

Marketer also did well, with 56,753 tourists visiting the province in the first half of the year compared to 37,319 tourists recorded during the same period last year.

But the provinces of Sorsogon and Catanduanes, Rome were the losers in terms of number of tourist arrivals. Sorsogon suffered an 18-percent decline in tourist arrivals compared to last year's record of 30,564 tourists who visited the province in the present record of 30,190 tourists.

The DOT report showed a decline in arrivals for Sorsogon, despite its newly renovated whale shark interaction in Barangay Bitan-agan, Donsol.

The province was founded by and ride excursions, scuba lessons and the evolution peace and order situation due to the armed conflict between the government and communist rebels and reports on extrajudicial killings.

Meanwhile, Catanduanes Province's tourist arrivals declined by 6 percent from 30,680 to 28,860 to 30,605 tourists in the first six-month period of this year.

## Poverty alleviation through taxation

(First of two parts)

IN HER SEVENTH SONA, PRESident Macapagal-Arroyo promised crucial reforms to filter revenues, reduce the budget deficit and tame inflation.

With more foreign investments expressed in the next 20 years, President Macapagal-Arroyo hopes that by then, "poverty shall have been marginalized and the marginalized reduced to a minor statistic class."

### How is poverty defined

Republic Act 8425 known as the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act defines the poor as individuals and families whose income fall below the poverty threshold as defined by the government, and who cannot afford to a sustained minimum to provide their basic needs of food, health, education, housing and other amenities of life. The National Statistical Coordination Board states that "for 2007, the gross families consisting of five members should earn at least P6,190 in order to meet their basic food and nonfood needs for this year, a sole breadwinner in a five-member family residing in the National Capital Region is expected to find a job that will help in bringing the family income above the poverty line if he/she only earns at most P 280 per day."

### Ways to alleviate poverty

There are many ways by which the government can alleviate poverty. One of them is through taxation.

To most citizens, taxation is a necessity as an act of government to get from those who have, to sustain its operations and to benefit those who do not have.

Therefore, it is because allocation.

This resource allocation comes in two forms, namely: Outright tax revenue and public-created tax revenue allocation.

Outright tax exemption means that the government is not collecting any tax, while preferential tax rate means that the government is imposing a reduced tax rate.

For example, individuals in the lowest income bracket are either income tax exempt or subject to lower tax rates of 5, 10 or 15 percent, while those with high income who are taxed at 32 percent.

Thus, a family man with four qualified dependent children and earning the minimum wage of P362 a day, or an average of P9,500 a month, will pay not more than P4,350 a year.

Overseas Filipino workers are also tax-exempt on their foreign-sourced income.

Small businesses or those with gross sales or receipts from business not exceeding P1.5 million or any 12-month period are not subject to the 12 percent VAT.

Instead, they are taxed at the rate of 3 percent of their gross quarterly sales or receipts.

As we go about our daily life, we must provide for our basic needs of food, shelter, health care and education.

To reduce the cost of basic needs and [illegible] under them of [illegible] to the poor, our tax laws provide for certain tax exemptions as follows:

### Food-related

The National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) grants VAT exemption to some transactions relating to the importations, sale or production of food items, such as: agricultural and marine food products in their original states; livestock and poultry-producing feeds for human consumption—flour, fish, vegetables, meat and fruits we buy from the market are exempt from VAT; fertilizers, seeds, seedlings and fingerlings; fish, prawn, livestock and poultry feeds; services by agricultural consumer growers and milling of palay, corn and sugar cane; and sales by marginal farmers and fishermen of unprocessed fish to the Cooperative Development Authority.

Housing is being made affordable also through VAT exemption.

For example, lease of a residential unit with monthly rental not exceeding P10,000 is exempt from VAT. The lease is true even with the sale of house and lot not exceeding P2.5 million.

### Health care

To reduce the cost of health care, the law exempts from VAT medical, dental, hospital, and veterinary services except those rendered by professionals.

Educational Services. Likewise, the cost of education is being supported by exempting from VAT educational services of duly accredited private educational institutions, and the sale, importation, printing or publication of books.

Income tax relief of schools and hospitals. In addition to being VAT exempt, schools and non-profit private educational institutions and government educational institutions are exempt from corporate income tax, while proprietary or non-profit educational institutions are taxed only at 10 percent (as against the regular 35 percent rate) of taxable income from direct school operations, provided income from unrelated activities does not exceed 50 percent of total gross income.

Similarly, non-profit private hospitals are taxed at 10 percent.

### Tax relief to BMBEs

The government encourages the formation and growth of Barangay Micro Business Enterprises or BMBEs to serve as conduit of Filipinos' entrepreneurial talents and generate employment and help the poor in the barangay level.

Under the enabling law, Republic Act 9178, BMBEs are exempt from income tax on income derived from operations.

To reduce the cost of BMBE borrowings from accredited financial institutions, interest, commission and discounts on loans owned by said institutions are exempt from the gross receipts tax.

### Revenue allocation

Another mechanism to help the poor is through budget or revenue allocation.

At the National Level. Tax revenues is the main source of government income. At least 40 percent of tax collected accrues to the National Treasury and is made available for general appropriations.

The revenue is allotted to various government departments and agencies taking into account their operational and project requirements.

This allotment goes through a tedious budgetary process before it can be disbursed.

As part of the administration's commitment to alleviate poverty through budgetary measures, a 56-percent budget increase for pro-poor programs and projects for fiscal year 2006, or a total of P366.6 billion compared to P234.5 billion for this year.

Allocation to LGUs. At the local levels, revenue allocation comes in the form of Internal revenue allotment (IRA), share of LGUs in national wealth, share of LGUs in the proceeds of the reformed VAT law and share in 5 percent from income tax or (GIT) under the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) Law.

Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA). At least 40 percent of internal revenue collection, known as IRA, are allocated to the LGUs through the country as provided for in the NIRC and the Local Government Code.

Provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays share in the IRA based on size, population and equal sharing up to a certain percentage.

### LGU share

LGUs also have a 40-percent share in the national government's collection from excise taxes on mineral products, royalties, and such other taxes, fees or charges, and from its share in any expropriation, joint venture or production sharing agreement in the utilization and development of the national wealth within their territorial jurisdiction.

In May 2006, the government adopted a fiscal reform program which included increasing the corporate income tax rate from 32 to 35 percent and the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent.

If you study well, this was a project of former Senator Ralph Recto and it some people say that this is not reason why he lost in the recent election.

The good news is that the LGUs' share in the increased VAT collection and 50 percent thereof are automatically for construction of school buildings, health structures, environmental conservation and agricultural modernization.

The Data Law also provides that 2-to 3-percent tax on gross income earned by all business enterprises within the economic zones shall be directly remitted to the treasurer's office of the municipality or city where the enterprises are located.

Innovations in tax administration and collection.

To further increase tax collection, the BIR and the Bureau of Customs continue to innovate by using the latest technology and marketing techniques.

### Computerization

Foremost of the initiatives is the Tax Computerization Program started in 1994.

The core of the Computerization Program is an integrated tax system with a standard processing framework designed to increase revenue collection, improve taxpayer service, promote better taxpayer compliance, and improve tax enforcement efficiency and transparency.

The integrated Tax System is a set of related systems and processes that provides maximum automation and minimum manual intervention in BIR operations.

With 14 application systems in place, it enables the Bureau to approach all of its information and major business functions in a considered manner.

The Run/ is the Reconciliation for Listing and Enforcement Program or the "run around mode approach" seeks to match big the data on sales provided by suppliers with the data on purchases provided by buyers.

This matching technique disclosures huge discrepancies in sales and purchases which provided the BIR a basis to invest and collect substantial deficiency income tax and value-added tax from many taxpayers.

Starting in 2001, the Electronic Filing and Payment System (EFPS) has been in place consistent with the requirements of the "Electronic Commerce Act."

Large and nonlarge taxpayers have availed themselves of the electronic filing and payment system, thereby presenting more efficient tax collection.

Also, staggered filing of certain mandatorily tax returns based on the industry classification have helped facilitate tax collection.

(To be continued)

*[The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official stand of the Philippine Statistical Association of the Philippines. The author is Senior and senior partner of Isla Lipana & Co./Pricewaterhouse Coopers. This article is an expansion of a paper she delivered on the past 20, 2007 at the inaugural event Academic Conference of Advances Internet on the theme "Harnessing Advances in Science and Technology for Poverty Reduction." Feedback at mapua@globelines.com.ph.]*

## GOINGS-ON

### Juan new LCF president

CHITU JUAN of Filipino Foundation has been elected president of the League of Corporate Foundations, taking over from Maria Feti of Petron Foundation who is now chair of the 73-member organization composed of the country's corporate foundations.

Other members of the board of trustees are Cnt. Alex Rosario of MVI Foundation, Randy Cuizon of Ayala Foundation, Kenneth Hodges of Bank of Commerce Foundation, Linda Mendez of SM Foundation, Manolo Gonzalez of Santander Foundation and Doris Go-Rilloza of EYE Foundation.

### Perfume-making seminar set

THE EUGENE PERFUME TRAIN Development Program will conduct a one-day seminar on perfume-making at the Sunvalley Blooms Unlimited Warehouse Rd., Pob. 3, Quezon City on Sept. 23, Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Topics to be discussed are scenting of materials and coding. Participants will undergo hands-on training on making perfume spray, cologne spray, roll-on perfume, cream type perfume and gel solid type perfume.

For more details, call 982-4618 or 373-4841, 436-76-29 and 421-10-77.

### Stella partners with La Salle

THE STELLA Review Program, a top global chartered financial analysis (CFA) review program provider, has partnered with the De La Salle Professional Schools to deliver affordable and quality CFA review programs to interested participants.

The partnership is designed to maximize the learning experience of Philippine candidates for the December 2007 exam level 1. the program started last Sept. 8 and will end in November.

A CFA designation is recognized globally as the gold standard for investment professionals.

For more information, visit www.benhamstevens.com or call De La Salle Professional Schools at 763-0811 to 14 local 530.

### Robinsons goes direct clearing

ROBINSONS BANK, 20 business holdings Inc.'s financial services arm, has recently accredited direct clearing as regulated by the Philippine Clearing House Corp. (PCHC).

In a statement, Robbank said the regulation was mainly due to its continuous expansion of business operations resulting in rapid growth.

For inquiries on Robbank's products and services, customers may contact the bank's call center at 631-8000, e-mail customercare@robinsonsbank.com.ph or log on to www.robinsonsbank.com.ph or visit any Robbank branches nationwide.

### Hokim on Dow Jones index

HOLCIM has been included in both the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index and the Dow Jones STOXX Sustainability Index for the years.

The recognition demonstrates that Holcim meets the high expectations placed on global corporations. The achievement is based on a further strengthening of the commitment to sustainable development.

### DOT steps up Japan campaign

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism has committed a 60-man delegation for the Sept. 14-16 World Tourism Congress and Travel Fair in Tokyo this night.

The fair, organized by Japan Association of Travel Agents, is four-day event now hyped to become one of the most important travel marketplace catering to the 17.4-million Japanese outbound market.

# For eco advocates ...

From page B1-1

This, cutting demand for lighting electricity would greatly free up capacity for industries and businesses.

In the Philippines, a household that switches to an 18-watt Philips energy saving CFL from an ordinary 100-watt incandescent lamp can save up to P4,000 in just one and half years, he explained.

This is based on a 12-hour usage for P9.50 per kWh.

As for consumer cost, energy efficient lighting costs less to operate and maintain, said Shiang Sing.

CFLs are 80 percent more energy efficient while providing the same light levels as regular incandescent bulbs, he explained.

CFLs also last six to 10 times longer and emit only a fraction of the heat of incandescents, Shiang Sing said.

Shiang Sing said they expect to have 5,000 incandescent lamps switched with energy savers by the end of their campaign and exhibit at the Edsa Shangri La Mall.

This would translate to about P27 million in energy savings.

"Imagine if more Filipinos make the switch," he said. "The energy savings can be used to fund other more pressing government matters such as improving education and healthcare in the country."

As a global leader in lighting solutions, Philips aims to lead an advocacy promoting energy management, Shiang Sing said.

He explained that, in the past five years, Philips has invested more than 400 million euros or about P35.2 million to research and development of energy efficient lighting solutions.

This, he said, has resulted to attractive new technologies and possibilities for the future.

Aside from the Philips energy savers, the company has made available this year new halogen bulbs that can provide 50 percent savings compared to traditional household bulbs.

Philips is also set to introduce light emitting diodes (LEDs), which use only an eighth of the power of regular light bulbs and even less than half that of CFLs.

These LEDs can also last up to 50,000 hours.

"With these forthcoming product introductions, saving energy will be much easier," he said.

SEN. MAR Roxas checks out one of the vessels of MetroBay Ferry Inc. during the inauguration of the ferry terminal in SM BayCentral. MPI is a wholly owned Filipino company, which was incorporated in 2000 to service the commuter needs of the towns and provinces surrounding Manila Bay.

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# BUSINESS Monday

A MOTHER and son view the photo exhibit of Global Warming Agenda with energy conservation campaign at Sitio Mangga-La Mud, Mandaluyong City. AJEY GONZALES

# For eco advocates, light at the end of the tunnel

**In cutting energy spent on lighting by 40%, 555 million tons of $CO_2$ will be kept from the atmosphere**

By Amy R. Remo

SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT can be as easy as changing a light bulb.

That is, replacing incandescent bulbs with energy-saving lamps can help save the world from global weakening, according to Philips Electronics and Lighting Inc.

"It might seem trivial to some people, but the reality is that switching from incandescent to compact fluorescent lamps not only to considerable peso savings, but also to a more sustainable future for everyone," said Wee Shiang Ming, general manager of Philips Lighting Philippines.

Conserving energy and saving the environment, he said, does not have to be a difficult task.

Thus, through "Initiatives of the World," Philips and the World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines have sought to engage the public in "simple" energy-conserving solutions to global warming.

The four-day energy management event, which kicked off on Thursday, aim aims to educate the public on the benefits of energy efficient lighting and other practices to help address critical environment challenges.

"Our goal is to create acceptance that indeed, global warming and climate change is happening, and we obviously encourage every Filipino, community and government to take action," Shiang Ming said.

Countries all over the world have begun feeling the devastating impact of global warming through floods, droughts and the melting of glaciers.

In particular, the Philippines is extremely vulnerable to climate change, which can cause food and fresh water shortages, increasing conditions, drought, among others.

In his speech, Shiang Ming explained that globally, lighting accounts for 19 percent of electricity consumption.

Meanwhile, 75 percent of the world's lights utilize old, inefficient technology such as incandescent lighting.

"By year 2030, we would be consuming 80 percent more energy if we continue with our current practices," Shiang Ming said.

"The required action is very simple: Eliminate inefficient and costly incandescent lighting today by switching to Philips' energy efficient compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)," he added.

In terms of environmental costs, Shiang Ming said that saving energy consumption on lighting could consequently reduce carbon dioxide emissions resulting from burning fossil fuels for electricity generation.

Greenhouse gas emissions contribute largely to global warming.

Meanwhile, energy efficient bulbs also use less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs.

Studies have pointed out that, in terms, energy currently spent on lighting by 40 percent, 555 million tons of carbon dioxide would be kept from being released in the atmosphere.

This translates to savings of up to 1,000 million barrels of oil a year—equivalent to the annual energy output of 100 power stations.

According to Shiang Ming, this can be crucial since global demand for energy is likely to increase by 55 percent from the present until 2030. Over 70 percent of this increase will come from developing countries, led by China and India.


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# Hot property sector shows no sign of cooling down

LABORERS do metal bars at a construction site. Other countries may be reeling from US subprime woes, but not the Philippines. AFP

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lucas

HAS THE PHILIPPINE PROPERTY sector lost its steam as financial markets cool down after the subprime mortgage fright in the United States?

In 2005, property companies and analysts lauded the start of a property boom—which had been long anticipated since 1997—largely due to a growing outsourcing industry that has spurred demand for office spaces, very low interest rates on housing loans, and an increasing appetite for homes from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

## Overrated fears

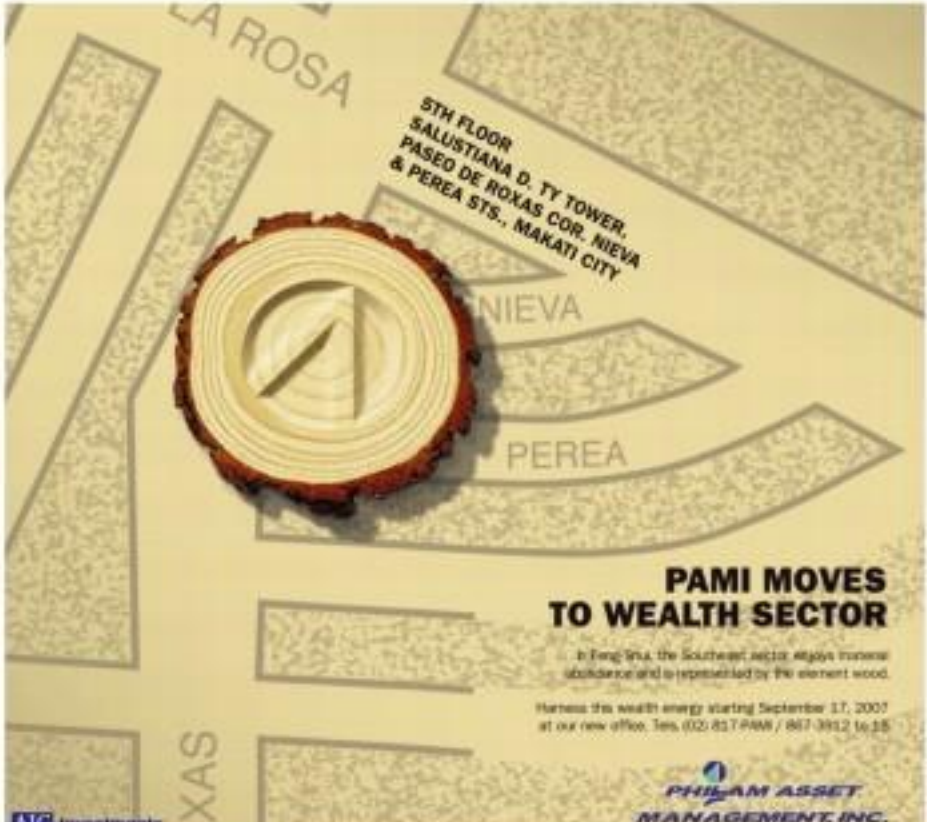
Two years later, industry analysts still believe that property investments are still a hot item, as reflected by resilient local and even overseas demand even if subprime mortgages have tightened credit access in the US, considered a relatively important market for home buyers of Philippine properties.

Market buzz of a host of a major growth driver in terms of residential sales from OFWs are, by far, also overrated, analysts said.

Subprime mortgages are mortgages granted to a borrower with a less than perfect credit report or those who have either missed or have been late in payments on a debt. The lure of subprime loans is that it does not require collateral.

Concerns about the massive housing and mortgage markets have swept the globe in

OUR PROPERTY B6-1



# Bamboo considered RP's next wonder plant

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

## Private firms lead campaign to make better use of abundant grass

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The dollar-earning potential of locally raised bamboo has encouraged private firms to find ways to make the country's bamboo industry graduate from conservative to aggressive.

The Philippine Bamboo Foundation (PBF) said there were 52,000 hectares of bamboo land in the country today, but the area just could not cope with the increasing global demand for finished bamboo products.

Of course, the country enjoys many toothpicks and barbecue sticks out of its bamboo.

### Ambitious plan

But Undersecretary Edgardo Manda, presidential assistant for southern Tagalog, said more can be done with bamboo.

"It's because the bamboo is the most available and abundant resource in the countryside," Manda told provincial officials at the Benguet State University here recently.

"The plan is ambitious. We will make the Philippines climb to second spot in the global ladder of bamboo exporters," said Reinaldo Sto. Rosa, PBF president.

He said China is the world's No. 1 bamboo exporter while the country is No. 6.

He said the bid to make the country a "bamboo power" would depend on how businessmen and farmers would respond to proposals to establish bamboo farms in their areas.

Manda admitted that bamboo-raising is not among the priorities of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture.

"The key is a successful private-led initiative backed by government support" he said.

The Rotary Club of Makati Central, Rotary Club of Baguio and Benguet, BSE and the PBF have started talks to put up bamboo farms, processing and a bamboo center for the Cordillera.

A bamboo venture is a manner park or nursery that would showcase all kinds of bamboo varieties complete with poles, a lake, fishpond and a research and training center.

### Crucial role

Benguet may yet play a crucial role in the endeavor, Manda said. "Benguet is the most suitable place in the Philippines to raise bamboos because of its climate," he said.

The country has many bamboo species, in Benguet, the most commonly raised is the "bayog" type, which could grow up to meter thick in 20 feet.

Raised operationally in Bayogyan Arak and Bilday towns, the "bayog" is sold from P120 to P150 a piece.

Dot Manda, who is also the Rotary Club Makati Central president, said it is not the case bamboo has no finished products that matter most.

### New products

From its roots to its uppermost part, the bamboo could produce all kinds of products,—medicine, beauty products, soaps, furniture, bricks, clothing, drinks, panels and even steel boards, he said.

He wonders, he said, China earned around $6 billion in bamboo exports in 2006 alone while the Philippines only got an average of $5 million a year.

He said the plan is to first inventory existing bamboo plants in the country and raise 35,000 plants per bamboo species.

The plants would be propagated using the latest scientific method, he said, courtesy of the technology by the International Network of Bamboo and Rattan based in Beijing, China, would provide.

He said the bamboos goes beyond its economic rooting.

In a presentation before local officials, Manda said the bamboo is a powerful "carbon dioxide sequestration."

He said a hectare of bamboo land could sequester 31 tons of carbon dioxide a year, a big boost in the bid against global warming.

The plant would also limit an estimate of soil, indicating its erosion control power.

Manda said that bamboo matures in four to five years and miners could enjoy multiple harvests in 20 years.

# Hot property sector ...

From page B1-1

the last two months, prompting sharp falls and penny dents and European stock markets and have prodded the federal Reserve to prepare a policy response to a possible credit downturn.

Analysts said the effects are hardly felt here, and may be manifested in the decision-making of OFWs toward investments.

"Right now, on the average, half of the inventory (of property firms) is sold abroad to investors in the US, Europe and the Middle East. For HI-spires in the United States who are excessively leveraged and who may have availed of subprime loans, they could have second thoughts in borrowing to buy property in the Philippines," Victor Asuncion, director for global research and consulting at CB Richard Ellis said.

### Insulated

Filipinos living in Europe and the Middle East are quite insulated which could rub marketing initiatives by local property firms toward those markets and other new markets as well for their projects.

The continued entry of prominents—such as nurses, teachers, physicians—in the US is also a source of relief for property firms, says Asuncion, since property firms can tap into this growing market for their marketing initiatives.

### Limited damage

In a research study, RBS Sun Hung Investment head of research Edgar Bancod said the extent of the damage of subprime losses on local banks and real estate firms is likely to be limited.

The Shanghai bourse of 19 Filipinos and the exposure of Philippine financial institutions to collateralized debt obligations (structured finance products that typically generate a diversified pool of debt assets) is limited to 0.2 percent of total industry assets.

Bancod says this is equivalent to roughly $1.8 billion or $117 million. Additionally, CDOs held by Philippine banks are made up of only A to triple A rated paper which meant that local banks have zero exposure to subprime assets.

Bancod also said a closer look will show that concerns that subprime woes would hurt real estate earnings is quite overdone.

In the case of Ayala Land, the country's largest property company, Bancod said the impact on sales of the "trend" law of business from Filipinos based in the US will be capped at 4.1 percent mainly because ALI has diversified products and markets.

### Manageable risks

ALI corporate spokesperson Jillian Ayco confirmed this, citing three reasons why the risks are manageable.

"We are still in the process of evaluating the potential impact of the US subprime crisis on our projects," Ayco said. However we believe that any effects will be quite manageable for three reasons: first is that while the US is an important market, our overseas sales are very diversified now with strong contributions from Europe, Japan and the Middle East," Ayco said.

Secondly, he said ALI's product lines have become more diversified to secure years and that a lot of the company's product launches have been in the middle-income and affordable segments wherein the US buyers historically have gravitated toward high-end projects.

Finally, the profiles of ALI's US-based buyers are from those with established professions and of strong credit standing. "In fact most of them pay cash," Ayco said.

Sales in OFWs accounted for 34 percent of ALI's first half residential sales. "Therefore they are a large and dependable segment which are still continue to focus our marketing efforts on," Ayco added.

### Philippine Property Boom: 1997 versus 2007

| FACTORS | BOOMERS IN 1997 | DRIVERS IN 2007 |
|---|---|---|
| Bank Lending activity | Mainly oriented at investors' speculative demand | Actual end-user demand |
| Market demand | Investors, local and users | Investors, localized foreign-end users (OFW/IP) |
| Development timing | Speculative on future demand | Strong pre-sales/ leasing take-up during development stage, $ 15 with prior lease commitment |
| Financing schemes | Unfavorable at 18% for short to mid term floating rate | Relatively more favorable at 11% fixed long-term; 8-9% floating |
| Market supply | Limited to Makati and Ortigas CBDs, resulting in inflated prices under strong demand | Emerging business districts provide options |

### Lessons from the past

Since the Asian financial crisis in 1997, residential sales have drastically dropped to never before seen levels at a third unit of 11 percent on a 25-year housing mortgage and in some cases such as Pag-IBIG loans, to as low as 6 to 7 percent for a P750,000 loan for 20 years.

This is compared with a 16 to 19 percent floating rate for the same term (25 years) during the crisis times (1997).

With such favorable conditions, analysts said long gone were the days that the property market runs roaring with speculators or those that "buy" property and will sell them at higher price.

"Banks in the Philippines are also very conservative, whereas in the US, they can lend to a buyer without collateral, requiring only minimal payments. We learned our lesson in 1997 and the BSP is critical of banks' activities," Asuncion said.

### Track record

Aside from this, home buyers are also critical of the property developer's track record and the location of the project.

Proof of this is the rise in prices for prime locations. For instance, office rental rates have grown in the last three years to P1,700 per square meter in Makati, P650 to P700 sq.m. in Fort Bonifacio Global City to Taguig, and P550/sq.m. in Ortigas, Pasig City, Asuncion said.

The latest offering by Eton Properties of the Lucio Tan Group for its condominium project in Greenbelt sold for P91,000/sq.m. between February to August and grew to P100,000/sq.m. today.

The Ayala Land Residences in Greenbelt also sold for P400,000/sq.m. last year and is today selling at P115,000/sq.m.

Filipino Land Inc. is also raising condominium prices at its Alabang development by 5 percent starting Sept. 1, Asuncion said.

"It's a specific numbers. Buyers are very critical," Asuncion said.

Asuncion said that these demand for business process outsourcing firms have remained resilient, with office spaces pre-leased until 2009.

Bancod also said that, if a US economic slowdown looms, this would put pressure on US companies' revenues which could push those companies to take advantage of dollar revenues to lower costs and improve profit margins.

"In this way, the subprime woes (for Philippine properties) may be offset by office sales, which remain buoyant," Bancod said.



## *Florsheims not only for grownups*

KIDS CAN NOW WEAR THE SHOE brand that is one of the most valued and respected in the world.

Florsheim USA Kids are now available in the Philippines through its retail outlets located in shopping malls like SM, Rustan's, Robinsons, The Landmark and tobi house boutique.

The Florsheim brand was established in 1892 and was traditionally a men's footwear brand. But it has since evolved and eventually produced women's shoes as well.

It launched its children's line in 1998 but its distribution was limited within the US and selected countries.

The shoes run in colours and lasts up to 12 years old.

The first stand-alone boutique of Florsheim USA Kids opened last July at 101 North Edsa The Block. Shoe boutiques are set to open soon in SM Cebu and Ayala's Trinoma in Quezon City.


# Ayala ...

From page B1-2

in the last 60 years, AYAT has built a niche as a premium for biodiversity. But over the last few years, AYAT has looked at tackling climate change as the way of the future.

"We are now introducing mitigation and adaptation practices. WWF sees it as part of our core business to engage corporations to make sure they create islands of sustainability as opposed to aggravating climate change," Lim said. "We also could be protecting life, not only biological but social and economic as well."

Initially, Lim said that WWF will participate in the planning stage and identify the "risk zones" for sustainability not just on the impact on the land, but also the sustainable development of all systems such as energy and water.

The means zero-lining more efficient design and buildings, being staff from the community, prioritizing sustainable energy sources such as getting power from Makiban geothermal, and reducing the ground water used.

"WWF will bring energy and water expertise, the social and architectural material life cycle requires. The challenge is how to incorporate those, and in the long run are less electricity, less power. This is a more cost effective way of development," said Benguet. "We hope that the people who will live here will also chose the same consumer behavior."

Ayala said: "It's not just about the hardware, but also the software, and the mechanisms that ensure that all our stakeholders are involved in this."

| INDICATORS | 1997 | 2007 |
|---|---|---|
| Inflation (% average) | 5.6 | 2.7 |
| Gross International Reserves | US$ 9.5 billion | US$ 35.1 billion |
| Equivalent months of import | 3.1 | 6.9 |
| Exchange Rate | P26.00 | P46.35 |
| External Debt ($ billions) | US$ 43 billion | US$ 53.6 |
| External Debt to GDP | 53.2 | 34.9 |
| **TOTAL RESOURCES** | **1997** | **2007** |
| Financial System (P billions) | 3,389 | 6,282 |
| Banking System (P billions) | 3,329 | 3,726 |
| Non-Performing Loans Ratio (%) | 4.7 | 3.9 |
| Capital Adequacy Ratio (%) | Not available | 18.8 |
| **BANK LENDING RATE (%)** | **1997** | **2007** |
| High | 26.4 | 8.5 |
| Low | 13.9 | 6.0 |

# INFOTECH

Text to your heartbeat: Register to receive updates by e-mail (Globe) or SMS (Smart)

E-mail: [illegible]

# Mobile TV in your hand

Text and photos by Charles E. Rubio

THERE'S NO DENYING that the N92 is one hefty device.

However, anyone will be more than willing to dismiss this fact in favor of the wonderful whole that Intel Nokia N Series has: a built-in digital video broadcast handheld (DVB-H) tuner.

Having the DVB-H makes the N92 the only cell phone model at the moment that could receive television signal coming from a broadcast service provider in the Philippines. 300 Media has given Smart Communications exclusive rights to use its entertainment service package called mytv.

The ability to watch TV programs on a DVB-H-equipped cell phone should be differentiated from what which online high-speed 3G networks, wherein the video feeds take a toll on the cell phone's battery life, and to mention its potential to strain the capacity of the cellular service provider if widely used.

## Power-efficient bursts

Instead, the DVB-H technology bypasses cellular networks and broadcasts directly to cell phones in power-efficient bursts of data. As a result, you could watch live TV anytime, anywhere—as digital video quality and stereo sound.

Sadly, mytTV's roadmap to new services—radio, text, and soon, we have to be able to access its programs, Mega Manila relationship to North and South Luzon Expressways, Cebu, Davao, Tagaytay, Boracay, and Subic-Clark-Clark zone, to Boracay and Cagayan de Oro).

TV programs available to subscribers include the cable channels CNN, BBC World, UNIC, Basketball TV, MTV, Asia TV, Fashion TV and other entertainment channels.

In fact, mytTV also announced that it plans to carry the PBA games live on its service beginning with the league's upcoming season.

## Still a cell phone

Leave no forget, the N92 is still a cell phone to expect 3G, 4Edge, GPRS, WiFi Bluetooth, infrared, USB and wireless LAN among its connectivity options.

Also, it has a 2.6-inch 16-million color screen (320 x 240 pixels of resolution), a 2-megapixel primary camera plus a secondary one, which is useful for video calls, an FM radio (with support for visual radio and more, GPS) and a mini SD card that supports up to 2 gigabytes of memory for storing up to 1,000 songs, or recording and storing broadcast TV programs.

Considering the N92 is a techno-legend lover for force, expect its battery life to be shorter than average (especially if several applications are running at the same time).

## Clamshell

While the N92 is still considered a clamshell, it features a flip and fold function for a total of three usage modes. The hinge may look flimsy but is tough enough to withstand repeated twisting.

In closed mode the N92 features a tiny secondary screen that displays a limited amount of information namely time, messages, battery and signal strength indicators.

In flip-open mode the phone operates as a traditional flip phone and it fits just right in the hand.

In capture mode, the screen twists 90 degrees so that it is at right angles to the keypad, much like holding a camcorder (the camera is located on the back of the hinge with the recording button located on the opposite side).

Finally in TV mode, the screen is rotated a further 90 degrees so that it becomes aligned with the long side of the keypad.

Because of these several screen orientations, operating the keypad is sometimes awkward and does take some getting used to.

Indeed, the N92 is a very powerful device. Being able to watch a TV program on that relatively tiny device does engender a sense of wonder. But at around P25,000, is the N92 worth it? Perhaps, especially if you appreciate the fact that you will almost always have access to a reader to be a significant leap forward for both the mobile and broadcast industries.

MEGA clamshell mode

FEEL like a camcorder when you use the MP3 this way

JAZZ TO IMPRESS

# A techie's bible to gadget survival

By Bernice Camille Bisnar, Krysie Jane Harding and Upper Visco
Adobo Magazine

NOT ONLY WILL THESE ACCESSORIES dress up your gadgets, but they'll also serve as protective gear. Check out some of the latest accessories up for grabs:

**iPod nano Armband.** This is connected to a breathable mesh with reflective details and takes in as many products as you.

**Sweet Sox Tees.** The shirts are fun for detail sewing perfect for your 'fave idol. Comes with a removable belt clip. $$$

**Mobile Wireless Waterproof Armband Case.** Sweat proof. Brought the trouble phone-mobile, so you don't have to wear your 'wear' sad.

**Wrist rest.** Get rest of these overlong nails with a detachable silicone padding.

**Belkin Gloves Top.** Every mobile geek just gotta have one sleek laptop-bearer.

**Imation Clip Flash Drive.** It's password-protected and guarded by rubber protectors, too. Talk about over-all security.



**Jacketek.** It's a home'n'hang protective gear. Zero-shock. Mostly. The best for your new hiking bag.

**Sticky Mat.** Placed on your car's dashboard, the Sticky Mat keeps electronic devices from falling save the sticky material. It also acts as an insulator.

**Imation Flash Notebook.** Bring your files with you and never wonder where you've stashed that key flash drive.

**Speck TempSkin.** Protects your Creative Zen's MP3 player needs extra TLC.

**Sanyo Eneloop Batteries.** Don't let your digicam die on you. Get the Eneloop batteries now!

**AC Travel Charger.** Connects plug to the USB cable and the adapter to the AC outlet to charge your USB devices.

# OpenOffice.org community ropes in IBM

By Rica T. Olchanski

THE OpenOffice.org COMMUNITY HAS announced that IBM will be joining its project to develop a popular open source software suite.

Theresing its weight behind the OpenDocument Format (ODF), IBM has announced its standalone programming codes that it has been developing as part of its Lotus Notes product, including accessibility enhancements.

IBM will also help make OpenOffice more accessible to those with disabilities, developing assistive technologies. IBM will include versions of OpenOffice in its future products.

"In the seven years since [we] founded the project, OpenOffice.org has fueled and fired the need for document form and productivity tools that are open and free," said Rob Lewis, Executive Vice President, Software at Sun Microsystems Inc. "We look forward to working with IBM and other members of OpenOffice.org to ensure that this momentum continues. We invite others to join us ... and participate in building the future of OpenOffice.org and ODF standard to gain popularity around the globe."

OpenOffice.org is a multiplatform and multilingual office suite and an open source project. Compatible with all other major office suites, the product is free to download, use and distribute. OpenOffice.org includes word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, drawing, database, and other modules. It uses the ODF or OpenDocument Format as its native file format but is also supports other common file formats, including Microsoft Office.

The software runs on all major platforms, including Windows, Unix, Linux, Solaris, Mac OS X, and is available in over 100 languages. OpenOffice.org is fully internationalized with other popular suites and may be used free of charge for any purpose, private or commercial, the license is LGPL.

"We believe this relationship will improve our ability to deliver innovative value to users of IBM products and services," said Mike Rhodin of IBM's Lotus division. "We also believe that the collaboration will lead to an even broader range of ODF-supporting applications [ISV 29.99]; and solutions that drive from the OpenOffice.org technology."

Until the advent of ODF computers would lose access to electronic data if they switched software providers, making providers comfortable to charging high licensing fees.

ODF has now emerged as the only viable and internationally-approved document format. It is owned by the entire technical community, and not locked in by competing suits of any one vendor.

Because open standards enable 'readers' software to be interchangeable, electronic records can be accessed even if the new solution provider's

Acer recommends Windows Vista® Business

intel Centrino Duo Core 2 Duo inside

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BUSINESS Monday

# Ayala breaks 'green' ground

## Developer forms partnership with WWF

By Cai C. Cabuenyan Jr.

THE COUNTRY'S PREMIERE LAND DEVELOPER, Ayala Land Inc., is breaking "new green" ground in its 1,700-hectare Cavitex township project in Laguna.

Ayala Land has formed a partnership with the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) to provide the property giant with a unique perspective in drafting the blueprint for an eco-friendly, energy efficient community at par with the world's best.

Ayala Land president Fernando Zobel de Ayala said: "We are doing a very holistic approach to this because at the end of the day, we are talking about a different way of looking at a project. It's very hard to make that change unless you can see it holistically."

Ayala said that part of Ayala Land's fundamentals is to build communities that work properly and flourish over time.

"We cannot have communities, especially at so large scale as Project 8, without fundamentally addressing these issues," said Ayala.

Jose Ma. Lorenzo D'Lim, president of WWF Philippines, said: "The challenge to meet is the requisite of sustainability. Traditionally developers look at ecological footprints and social equity. Our help comes in terms of bringing technologies and experts as partners to figure out how this could be done here."

"It's not only a groundbreaking development, it is a groundbreaking relation between two organizations that are leaders in their respective fields. It's a unique collaboration, between nonprofit and for-profit organizations," said Ayala Land corporate vice president Jaz Estrada.

Evelyn F. Manzano, Ayala Land of operations Cavitex, said ALI tapped WWF because the Cambulong project would be the biggest in the Philippines.

"It covers 1,700 hectares of former sugar lands owned by the Yulo family. It's about seven times as big as the Makati central business district," said Manzano.

Tan said Ayala Land was not satisfied with just complying with national building standards and meeting requirements like the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificate, which is acceptable in the Philippines but not to other parts of the world.

Tan said the whole idea was to figure out how to include sustainability in projects.

Manzano also said Ayala Land chose WWF over the normal corporate advisers because it looks at environmental issues from a bigger perspective.

AYALA LAND

AYALA Land partners with the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines. Marking the occasion are ALI officials led by MVP Jaz Estrada (left) and WWF president Lori Tan (2nd from left).

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# LIFESTYLE

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS •

## Greg Bolaños' art of seduction

By Gary C. Bonilla
Contributor

ARTISTS ARE ALWAYS seized by the power of seduction and their works usually attest to this, depicting eroticism and sensuality, and becoming a colorful testament to our

What counts most is the ability to express ourselves.
Learn from the very best!
Study at:
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## Creative ventures with the Sony Ericsson P1i

Take your imagination for a spin with the P1i, the latest in the highly popular series of smartphones from Sony Ericsson. Its slimline but packs the most hypocritical feat for business and pleasure. There's a turn-and, it'll-mastered, a stylus to handwriting recognition and a virtual keyboard. That's three ways to easily jot down for the next big thing, or even (but let's hope) for the lyrics to your favorite song. The improved handwriting display lets you create it even under bright lighting conditions in the great outdoors, the studio or the theater.

Add push email services like Exchange ActiveSync™ and BlackBerry Connect to the P1i and you receive emails in a snap. You can search your corporate account or personal emails to come up to in keep you in touch. Synchronize your tasks, notes, contacts, calendar and personal information with your PC or Mac.

The Sony Ericsson P1i lets you take care of business no matter you need and with Word, Excel, PowerPoint and even PDF files coming up. Wireless printing mobile the best way to do business. With UMTS and integrated WLAN, the P1i assures you of ultra-fast web browsing, data downloads and emails. Enjoy your RSS feeds. Display websites in full, widescreen glory from the CyberLife™ Web Browser, while surfing anywhere via WiFi hotspots.

Bursting into celestial yet here at an awards show, gallery opening or premiere party? Relax the P1i ready. Instantaneous (and with the 3.2-megapixel camera and the business card scanner will process and transfer the information directly to your contacts. And that's not all the user can do. With autofocus, digital zoom and photo light, the P1i is about taking great pictures and video. Video recording, streaming and viewing are a snap. You can even blog pictures straight away with a Picture Blogging application.

Need a PC in the kitchen? Running into an other time zone doesn't mean the smartphone will suffer jet lag as well. Open up flight mode to be able to use its other applications on the plane. Get your appointments and when you move into another time zone, the P1i's dual time zone and calendar will update the appointment. Now that's the difference.

Now it's not all business with this on-the-move companion. It's true that the P1i's over black and metallic shine and streamlined body makes it eye-catching. In the boardroom, studio or event chair. But underneath this chic design is a heart for fun. Enjoy the FM radio, 3D games, multi-format supported media player and Bluetooth stereo streaming capability. A host of optional Bluetooth accessories let you make the most of its stereo sound.

The P1i comes with a clear 4GB Memory Stick Micro™ (M2™), aside from external 160MB User Memory.

So unlock a creative professional side without some inspiration from the Sony Ericsson P1i? If you think one of the best, you'll want this in your pocket.

I freedom to create
sonyericsson.com/freedomtocreate

He takes out his Sony Ericsson P1i and starts sketching.

And enters their contacts via Business Card Scanner.

He uses push email to send prospective clients his new design.

He sits back and surfs the internet with WiFi. Mark receives yet another piece of good news.

Sony Ericsson P1i

Sony Ericsson

# Creativity is just a PDA phone away

The new Sony Ericsson product can be a notebook, a sketchpad, a camera, whatever

CREATIVITY IS A VALUED trait in any business and is integral to innovation and innovation. Sony Ericsson's latest PDA phone, the P1i, was designed to aid creativity by living whatever its user needs when inspiration strikes him—a notebook, a sketchpad, a camera, and a means to do business whenever you are.

The following people are great examples of those who combine creativity and business savvy.

## Irony dot.com

Known for her ironic wit and self-deprecating sense of humor which have been on display in her numerous books (from the "Twisted" series to "Chicken Pox for the Soul"), Jessica Zafra started her domination of the World Wide Web in 1995, through her equally entertaining blog Jessicazafra@twitpic.com.

"The advantage of Filipino bloggers," she said, "is that the Philippines is a country without a sense of modernity. You can find things to blog about just from setting yourself."

She updates her blog on the "very unfit" P1i. With WiFi and a 3.2-megapixel camera, "I can check my blog and upload new entries from wherever I am," said Zafra's usually sardonic demeanor so calm when she likes to work.

Zafra is now involved in a project that could help make blogging a full-fledged business in the country. Tie-with Mail Eve Media. We're organizing the best Filipino blogs so we can approach advertisers and negotiate with them as a single network. The single objective is for bloggers to get paid for something they already do."

## Beyond the reel

Mary Anne Quick Hinares, director of "Erik," "Super Skirpl," and "Ang Bang Lihagan," and director-producer of music videos for some of today's hottest bands.

What most people probably don't know is that this filmmaker is also an entrepreneur who channels his creativity into five production ventures. Blow-up Babies is a photography studio he put up with friends because "the industry we all work in is very unsteady and volatile, so it was nice to have something that was like our office away from home but had hope."

Hinares has also put up Mag-art, a music bar born out of Quail's love for music. The place features a healthy mix of artists, and even a gallery of contemporary art. Hinares' partner Barb Dalton curates.

Managing his work and business responsibilities takes a bit of juggling, which Hinares does with the help of his P1i. "My whole blog-art-music schedule is in my phone. The notepad is where I jot down all those ideas I have about dialogues and transitions, while the voice text function is great for me because I can contact my staff, employees or partners without effort."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEO ROMERO
STYLED BY MARY ANNE HINARES
MAKEUP BY ANA ABELA
THANKS TO CHRISTINA E. FERNANDEZ-GUILLEN

## Resident game boss

If people assume it's all fun and games for someone who works at Level Up! (LU), the biggest online gaming company in the country, they're wrong.

Ron Cabayao, chief operating officer of LU international, oversees the operations in three countries, including India and Brazil.

"It's interesting how you really need to 'practice' creativity," Cabayao said. "A lot of people think creativity is the assumption (skimmed) thing only creative people are lucky enough to capture. But those people are actually disciplined and 'practice' creativity by making sure they are always exposed to new things."

As the helm of the pioneer publisher of online games in the country, Cabayao sets up and about figuring out how best to deliver the game experience to users, optimize IT infrastructure and satisfy the customers.

It's a good thing "the P1i helps me stay on top of the things I need to do," Cabayao said. "It's great that it's got a dedicated and 3G so I'm always connected to whatever country I'm in. There and applications is also great and, with the widescreen of the P1i, reading e-mail and surfing the net is much easier."

## House of fashion

Raja Laurel, fashion designer, has produced collections of exceptional quality and innovative design.

"I always look to journeys to provide me with inspiration," Laurel said. "I get excited about journeying to a place I've never been to, through a book, the cinema, or through movies that provide a theme I have not met."

Holding resonance with business sense, Lara is the president of Laurel, the exclusive boutique that showcases his ready-to-wear line. He has gained schedule and constant traveling are some schedules that developing and documenting his design ideas.

"I've always had a notebook where I could take down my inspirations, and when I arrive at in the office, the P1i is my sketchbook. I can write little notes to myself, take photos of things that inspire me, listen to music. The pen input gives me the freedom to be creative."

# *Beyond the musty air of academicism*

By Constantine C. Tejero

MANY ACADEMIC OUTINGS are limited on passages of literature, from Homer and the Bible/Koran through Shakespeare and Dante to Henry Hawes Hemry Wardsworth.

Aside, of course, from the rot of the humanities and the European, among the most recognizable literary paintings are those of the Neoclassicists like David, the Romantics like Delacroix and Delacroix, the Pre-Raphaelites like Waterhouse, Millais and Prinsep.

The images are usually of characters or scenes from Shakespeare, Tennyson, the Bible, mythology, "The Purgatorio," or historical events memorialized in song and legends.

There are lovely, often powerful works, but one's appreciation of them would be so much enriched if one knew beforehand the literary passages on which they've been based. Double, in fact the amusement of the visual composition and the incalculable pleasure of literature.

In the case of illustrating plays, biblical passages, lines of sonnets, mythical tales and narrative poems, the communication from page to canvas is often blocked, according to the rather severe air and academic feel of the painting.

The most delicate and probably the hardest to communicate is when one is bound to capture only a subtle mood, vague atmosphere or opaque emotion, and one is often left to wield nothing but flimsy allusions. Sometimes one would be forced to yield to plenty of color and execution (but the excellent painting can become disoriented here in literary origin.

This was what Alice Joy Bolla had tasked himself in trying to capture in visual terms Czeslaw Milosz's "A Song on the End of the World."

"THE DAY the World Ends"

"A GIFTED Pair on the Shoulder"

"JOYFUL End"

"SWEET Waters"

"OUT of the House and into the World at White"

Bolla's entry merge from the suggestive, like "A Gifted Pair on the Shoulder" and "Out of the House and into the World at White," to the ironic, like "Sweet Waters," "Bad Days," "Joyful End."

All look dreamy, even serious, somewhat literal illustration of endtimes, which is not the spirit of Milosz's lyric at all. What the poem has me imagined is more an upbeat response from the reader, the paintings give a downbeat note to the theme.

The only piece in the exhibit that evokes the brutality of the apocalypse, as what Milosz must have in mind, is "The Day the World Ends" with its sky crackling of fire and unchronologically-different roles. It is a perfect image for the bleakness of the everyday tinged with anticipation of eternity.

Bolla's style is reminiscent of Grace Alcantara's "Murder des Rotten Arts," which uses the stream-of-consciousness technique to the words gone on to examine contemporary mores.

Bolla's says he was inspired by the poem, which "would best describe how the world for this short man is ruined." As he as we can see, however, his series of images inspires a profoundly different feeling in us.

Limiting his palette to blue, sky-blue, blue-green, gray, black, brown, with occasional patches of orange, amber, green, Bolla has created a washed-out world of wide, desolate vistas of uninhabited buildings, empty streets and bridges, great ruins. The whole is reminiscent of the color bandit, the melancholy and mysterious quality of the works of Delvaux and De Chirico.

Bolla's titles merge from the suggestive, like "A Gifted Pair on the Shoulder" and "Out of the House and into the World at White," to the ironic, like "Sweet Waters," "Bad Days," "Joyful End."

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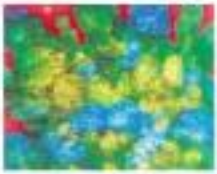
FROM LEFT: "Wasted Genius" II, by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz; "Winds," by Ramon Balaquit; "Cellist," by Vincent de Pio; "Opening Ceremony," by Jarmel Sunio



# Art auction to raise funds for good causes

SIXTY PAINTINGS FROM 35 artists will be featured in "Art for a Cause," a fund-raising project of the Rotary Club of makati Bel-Air. The exhibit opens Sept. 20–7 p.m., and runs until Dec. 6.

The works can be previewed at Galleria Joaquin Marin (277 F. Carmona St. and Montemayor Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan).

The works are by Jarmel Sunio, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, Alberto Partal, Cip de Pio, Lydia Velasco, Carlo Magno, Dominic Rubio, Ronna Balaquit, Ramon-Ramon Gil Isidl Campos, Gene de Lizarde, Edwin Bit Bunoc, Glenn Cagandahan, Jovan Benito, Jerry Montaño, Vincent de Pio, Aileen Lorenzo, Rajan Rio Araña, Jacquie Pemilian, Alje Pingol, Arlador Bargolita, Richard Schmoeller, Jessie Marbiser, Chadwin di Lorenzo, Pelu Tiglao, Jerome Francisco, Marciel Bonoa and Nikolai Ichiyo.

The auction seeks to raise funds for Rotary's projects, such as Sawad Balitang Sibol Literacy Program, which will raise funds for classrooms and for teachers' training, al lowmeans, food and uniforms; the Oil Drilling Sibol program, to create food and medicine for quintessentry of at least 40 children for six to 15 months; the Gk Silore Filipinas project for the Gk Mallawville common

"MARKET Scene," by Jovan Benito

ity in the UK youth development and mentoring programs; the Gk Silore Nairobi programs; and the Mallawville Tomelas Patrol Program.

To the artists, "Art for a Cause" is a thanksgiving for the good fortune they have been enjoying during the past years. Sunio, Alcuaz, Partal, Velasco, Rubio and Magno's works have been featured in several auctions at Sotheby's, while works of Jerry Montaño, Vincent de Pio, Aileen Lorenzo, Jacquie Pemilian have been recently accepted by the international auction house Leonard for inclusion in its Oct. 21 auction of Southeast Asian paintings in Singapore, founder Rotarian Edwin Tan Beyes and Jovan Benito have had shows in Singapore.

Call 7250203 or 7250418. Visit www.galleriajoaquin.com.

"PARADISE"

"QUINTO"

"TAG-ARAW" 3

"Bili Maraya"

# Greg Bolaños' art of seduction

From page C3

unceasing longing for the sublime despite the limits of our vision.

We dream of heaven; when life is, indeed, unbearably hellish. We desire to be reunited with loved ones even at the risk of suffering shame. And we encounter in fantasy until the end just gifts we live to.

Seasoned artist Greg Bolaños has always been sensitive to the wee winged within our souls, and his rapturous art reveals the secret of insatiable desire that has intrigued people over the centuries.

In "Paradise," we see a half-nude woman probably about to take a bath in a stream. She has reason not to be worried—after all, in paradise one is not afraid of one's nakedness. Like her, we are also invited in that scream perhaps to fathom what we have lost. We take a plunge to momentarily leave the all too-familiar everyday scenes.

We hope to regain that feeling where the air is so sweet to the heavens (Psalm 19:1), the world of gluttony where all our needs are met. This is perhaps why Bolaños' favorite subject is the fruit as depicted in such works as "Sugarcane" and "Quinto." This reminds us of the edenic jobs now we have either repressed or forgotten.

"SUGARCANE"

## Sacred time

The paradise theme reverberates in most of Bolaños' works, as in a woman sifting fruits in "Bili Maraya," or a couple or family about to launch in "Tag-araw III" and "Lakambini." These works reveal the notion of sacred time, or time where people are much closer to nature and a life not dictated by mechanized reproduction.

For most Filipinos, time is experienced by rituals and announced by the ambulant vendors peddling their wares in the streets. Hence, in "Bili Maraya," the woman is the Filipiana/ time archetype, just as she and us punctuate the intervals in our meals and rituals in our daily lives. She prepares the meals of her husband, as that idyllic scene in Genesis, and in these works we see sculptural

"SUSTENTO"

by her presence.

## Cravings

Bolaños' secret is to seduce our senses and is much in control.

Thus, the scenes he chose to depict became rich life-affirming acts, whether a mermaid weather or a mother who looks at her baby, hypnotized, as in "Sultana." The Madonna is, indeed, a powerful image

**His rapturous art reveals the secret of insatiable desire**

that entrance people over the years. It is as old as history itself.

One is overwhelmed by the scene of a mother's love for her child. Neither of them or are outsiders in his works because we are also that child who longs for caress of a mother in these politically and economically troubled times.

It is during this time when we want to retreat to our paradise, not to forget what is happening but more to remind us that there is something worth fighting and living for in this country.

If there's one truth in Greg Bolaños' works, it is the fact that what we are in these scenes is also what we hear—they are, indeed, the throbbing of our hearts and we deny that is to deny what life is all about.

"Greg Bolaños' Blockpress" opens 6 p.m. today at Chaos Expression Gallery, 2/F Bistro Conchalucia Bldg., 222 Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati. Call 8900718 or 8917-8941405. Exhibit runs until Sept. 29.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2007 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

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ROMA (P1690)

# 'Next' to nothing

"Next: A Novel"
*By Michael Crichton*
(HarperCollins, New York 2006, 431 pages)

**By Raul S. De Vera**

PERPETUALLY IN KEEPing as a creative thinker constantly searching for the next big idea for his books, Michael Crichton has himself underscore an evolution in as an author. First, he healed to overwork his novels by mixing pages and pages of scientific explanations with theses but preparative plots, often taking scientific fact and then overdoing it into an ostensibly Hollywood-style fiction, something very much evident in "The Andromeda Strain" and, of course, "Jurassic Park."

But recently, Crichton has gone in altogether different vector. Now, he takes a scientific issue he feels strongly about and when writes a seamless, much complex novel around it, hewing closely to science but which he handling the hot-button aspect, something on display with "Next" (misrecombinology) and the very controversial "State of Fear" (global warming).

Thus, it shouldn't come as much of a surprise that Crichton's 15th novel follows that latter trend. "Next" is Crichton's treatise on the science and business of genetic engineering, an area in broad in this book's oblivion vague. From the onset, it's been astute documented to challenge the reader to left-wonderful spirit from didn't you know. The novel's disclaimer reads: "This novel is fiction except for the parts which aren't."

With that in mind, Crichton then initiates the reader into the world of genetic engineering through a series of news reports ("Blondes becoming extinct?") and of course, the plot itself. This time, Crichton weaves a DNA-level story with stolen superdrug cells of characters.

### Legal battle over genetics

Among the many plot threads "Next" employs is the following: the ongoing legal battle between geneticist company BioGen and the cells of Frank Burnet, the mysterious changes done to recipient of Gene Breach Memorial. Burnet employees Josh Winkler's clandestine testing of the company's "normality" serum on people he knows, the supposed insurance of a Dutch-Asian girl called Beccalonia Orangutan deep in the Sumatran jungle, a geneticist named Henry Kimball and his family's attempt to dispose an intelligent human-chimpanzee hybrid named Dave as one of their own, the road trip of bounty hunters named Vincent Paul Dolby (the ruthless agenda of the National Institute of Health's Bob Bellamin, an avid, not to forget, an intelligent and extremely chatty parrot named Gustafe.

There aren't a plot, there's scope. "Next" has so many things going on at the same time that it really is hard to figure out (and absurd). But reader needs to focus on, Crichton doesn't leave the reader hanging. Somehow, he really does manage to tie together all those seemingly unconnected subplots—but the way it all comes together is even more unbelievable than the idea of a transgenic chimp passing himself off as a chubby with an inherited hair problem.

### Fascinating moments

"Next" does have its fascinating moments, particularly when Crichton shows how unerringly conspiracies and cover-ups eventually are somehow patterning grows, leading to a race to patient one grant before someone else does. His little news reports are humorous but to the mark, and he does well in moving The plot forward seamlessly.

But much that is unclear by the sheer silliness of Crichton tries to stage with a straight face—and Bob's not even trying the case character that Crichton clearly intends for a humorous purpose. The resolute of the child's parent Dave and aren't even funny. At one point, readers of "Next" will sincerely want to put the book—and the reader by extension—out of its misery. Another major weakness is that, unlike his other books, there really isn't anything to surely

The 'Jurassic Park' author goes for something a little different, but his latest novel goes straight to the apes

the reader in "Next," so he gets gyman, Tilton, killer bacteria, on so since either.

Which is unfortunate considering that "Next" is the project where Crichton actually has more invective than exposition. But more subplots do not automatically translate into a better novel, especially if readers can't tell the characters apart. An ambitious novel undermined by its overripe complexity of events, Michael Crichton's newest book at least has a title that readers can identify with, because that's exactly what they'll say upon reading this one: "Next, please."

*Available at National Book Store*

# *Book club focuses on Gaiman novel*

LONG AFTER THE DECLINE of fairytale classics, a modern saga of fantasy tales continues to live on with prolific writer Neil Gaiman.

This month, Fiction Book Club 2 presents "Stardust," his enthralling exploration into the realms of magic and humanity.

In "Stardust," Gaiman chronicles the vestiges of a young man's mythical quest for his heart's desire in a time when one world is separated from the land of Faerie. But once every nine years, villagers are allowed to trade and mingle with magical inhabitants across the forbidden wall. During this breach in worlds, a young Dunstan Thorn finds himself making love to an alluring but sacred fairy maiden.

Nine months later, a human infant enclosed with certain Faerie features and abilities is found at the crack in the barrier. The boy named Tristran Thorn soon falls in love with Victoria Forester and makes an mysterious vow to catch the falling star for his beloved.

The journey takes him throughout Faerie, where he uncovers his mythical heritage and embarks on an adventure of trials. Unfortunately, Tristran isn't the only one in search of the star. His journey takes him into perilous territories, where he is pitted against witch queens and cunning creatures. Eventually, he can reconcile to his discovery of the fallen star, which turns out to be a lovely young woman.

The Fiction Book Club will hold discussions on the novel on Sept. 25, 6:30 p.m. at Dewey Books Megamall (tel. 470-2698 to 99). Get a chance to win raffle prizes and free coffee from the bookstore's Coffee shop.

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THE SCHOOL focuses on the humanities, arts and social studies.

TWELVE-YEAR program after preschool prepares students for the French Baccalaureate.

THE SCHOOL emphasizes the sciences and modern technology.

# The French connection in education

FOR CENTURIES, icons of French culture have tickled the fancy of many Filipinos—Napoleon Bonaparte, Victor Hugo, Louis Pasteur, Catherine Deneuve, Charles de Gaulle, among others. In fact, revolutionary leader Andres Bonifacio was grossly inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution—equality, liberty, fraternity—which helped guide the Katipunan movement.

Many people view France as an epitome of democracy and progress which can be attributed to a tradition of quality education.

But one need not travel half-way around the world to get this world-class pedagogy.

In a quiet village in the heart of the metropolis, Ecole Française de Manille (EFM), a French-run international school, beckons to students from all walks of life who go for French education, lifestyle and culture early on in their lives.

Founded in 1978, the school offers primary and secondary programs which conform to the curriculum set by the French Ministry of Education and the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd).

To ensure compliance with international standards, the school is regularly inspected and experienced teachers are recruited mostly in France.

Its 12-year program after preschool prepares students for the French Baccalaureate, which is a passport to admission to European universities.

According to EFM headmaster Mireille Vincent, the curriculum aims to develop critical literacy in the French and English languages and mastery of German, Spanish and/or Mandarin, and a deep grasp of his/her own culture.

She said that the school also emphasizes mathematics, sciences and modern technology, humanities, arts and social studies, which are pillars of European societies.

Information and communications skills, which are key competencies in the 21st century, are also cultivated. Students take a class-level online test in grades 5, 8 and 11 to obtain an internationally-recognized certificate of proficiency. They also undergo training in road ethics, which is now required to most European countries when applying for a driving license.

### International network

One advantage of EFM is its affiliation with the "Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Etranger" (AEFE), the world's biggest network of educational institutions consisting of 427 schools in 130 countries. It allows students to move to different countries and to pursue studies under the same French educational system, which is recognized as among the world's best.

"These schools are noted for academic excellence that more than 300,000 students around the world receive, as well as for their openness to the languages and cultures of the host countries," Vincent said.

### Language proficiency

Cognizant of the need to effectively communicate in the global market, EFM recently launched a bilingual French and English program which takes effect at the start of the new school year this month.

The new scheme aims to help enhance students' proficiency in the English language.

As part of its integration with the rest of Europe, students take up German language starting Grade 6, Spanish starting Grade 8, and with an option to study Mandarin in Grade 11.

### Well-rounded program

The school promotes good citizenship through the election of student leaders, and visual arts and music, which are part of the curriculum.

SCOUT Française de Manille beckons to students from all walks of life who go for French education, lifestyle and culture early in their lives.

EFM also offers sporting activities such as swimming, rugby, soccer, basketball, volleyball, taekwondo, wall climbing and athletics to keep students active and physically fit.

Last summer, it hosted the Asian Phinete Rugby Festival in line with the Rugby World Cup 2007 which will be held in Paris this summer.

The event, which featured youth rugby demonstration games, was highlighted by the awarding of the Rugby World Cup tickets and round trip Air France-KLM tickets to two EFM students who excel in the sport... Tom Brito and Jean Carpina.

They will be part of the global team of 80 children which will play against French children.

EFM also has extra-curricular activities such as mini-theater, pottery, ballet and jazz dance, cooking, and music which are offered in cooperation with its German school counterpart.

Students get involved in projects of non-governmental and community organizations as part of their outreach.

Grade 9 students, for instance, visit and observe hotel firms and various institutions. Afterwards, class lectures are held to process their learning experiences to give them an understanding of the real world outside.

For more information on Ecole Française de Manille, call 776-1800, e-mail efm@phinetmanila.org or log on to efm.manila.org/EFM.

SENATOR Pia Roxas is conferred the Gawad Dangal ng Lahi during the 57th Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature. Roxas, the guest of honor and speaker, is flanked by Palanca chair Carlos Palanca III; Sylvia Palanca Quirino, director of the Palanca Foundation; and Christine Quirino Pacheco, deputy director.

# Filipino PR veterans tell success stories in new book

NINE SEASONED FILIPINO PUBLIC relations practitioners retell the highlights of their careers in a new memoir and how-to collection that helps pave the course as a profession that is still scarcely understood as it is continuing.

Edited by Ramon Mitrado, "How To Make It In PR: 99 Veteran Tell Their Stories" will be launched formally on Sept. 19, 5 p.m. at Powerbooks Liwi Greenbelt 4, Makati. The launch will be jointly sponsored by Concept Communications International, Inc. the publisher, and the International Public Relations Association-Philippine Chapter.

The book duo takes readers through the evolution of public relations in the country from the period covering the late 1950s to the present, "should be invaluable to young people contemplating a career in public relations," according to writer Patricia DeDoncy.

Each of seven presentation PR pioneers Charlie A. Aguanta, Jay L. Bocobo, Miss J. Bonifacio, Rene E. Nieva, Pete A. Padre, Jr., Virgilio Q. Panlilio, Frankie E. Simeon, Cleste S. Tiglao, and Rustico F. Mitrado provide a personal account of their individual careers through engaging, sometimes amazing stories of various outdoor campaigns, the business they've learned from and the values they have lived by. The collection also features a foreword by former J. Ramos Thompson chairman A.J. Cabico who says, "A great wealth of experiences is contained in these pages. This book is recommended for anyone who is in the communications business."

Public Relations Society of the Philippines president Butch Raquel has called it "a new document... of how the writers who are some of the best in our industry worked and have enriched the PR profession in our country".

Call 7385150, 7344774 or 8174471.

# Call for papers for UST national conference in literature

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS, declared a Center of Excellence in Literature by the Commission on Higher Education, will hold the national conference-in-literature, "Intersections: Crossroads and Crossovers in Literature and Culture," on Jan. 28-31, 2008 at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex.

Interested parties who wish to read papers may submit their abstracts of not more than 250 words, brief biographical information and contact details via cpl-cal@mail.ust.edu.ph not later than Sept. 30.

Papers will be grouped under the following headings: Literature and the Arts, Sciences, Languages, History, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Ethnicity, Sexuality, Gender, Pop Culture, Media, Religion, Technology, and Medicine.

Call 7317416 or 4063011 loc. 4051.

## *Filipino language teachers to hold seminar-workshop on curriculum*

THE SAMEDUMAN SA Filipino (Samfil) will hold a national seminar-workshop on current challenges in curriculum development on Oct. 25-26 at the National Institute for Science and Mathematics and Education Development (NISMED) in UP Diliman, Quezon City.

Samfil is a broad association of teachers' groups in Filipino. The seminar-workshop aims to identify issues and problems related to the implementation of the general curriculum endorsed by the Commission of Higher Education and the Department of Education.

Teaching demonstrations to be led by Jerry M. Dayagdag of UP Diliman, Edison Fermin of Miriam College, and Ronan Capindeg of Ateneo de Manila University will be part of the seminar-workshop.

Fee: 024-4747 or 426-5810 or e-mail pensiman@yahoo.com.

# US-based UST medical alumni hold record-breaking reunion

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS Medical Alumni Association (USTOMAA) held its grand reunion and convention in the Wynn Hotel Resort & Casino in Las Vegas recently with a record-breaking attendance of over 1,200 members.

The new set of elected officers were headed by Dr. Filemon C. Dizon-Gapuhan Jr., president of the USTOMAA; Dr. Primo A. Andres Jr., president of the USTOMAA Foundation; Dr. Estella Evangelista, executive director; Dr. Antonio Gonzales, president, USTOMAA; and Dr. Dax Ibarra, president-elect, USTOMAA Foundation.

In his inaugural address, Gapuhan urged Thomasian medical alumni to give their strong support to their alma mater's choiced course for the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery and UST Hospital. Andres, on the other hand, stressed the expanding role of the foundation in Philippine nation-building.

The endowments fund of the USTOMAA has surpassed the US$10 million mark and only the interest income from the principal fund as approved by the board is disbursed for its projects such as scholarships, research, faculty development, materials improvement for UST, cots of indigent patients of UST Hospital, and charitable causes to alleviate the condition of poor Filipinos.

The five-day festivities were climaxed by the presence of the UST Rector Magnificus, Fr. Ernesto Arcos, OP, dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery (USTFMSS), Dr. Grace Geronilla-Gonzaga, and USTFMSS regent, Fr. Wilfredo Cabuslay, OP. It was also highlighted by the Annual Luis Memorial Lecture, "Progress in Pediatric Surgery: A 50-Year Evolution," given by prominent pediatric surgeon, Dr. Herman Reyes of Class '57.

THE UST Medical Alumni Association in America in Las Vegas reunion. (From left, seated) Dr. Aurora Gonzales, Sylvia Andres, Dr. Estella Evangelista, Dean Grace Gonzaga, UST Rector Fr. Ernesto Arcos, OP, Dr. Primo Andres, Dr. Zoe Yore, Melinda Valentino and Margie Espuelas; (second row) Dr. Antonio Gonzaga, Dr. Flavio Cabreg, Dr. Del Yore, Dr. Noel Cruz, Dr. Jose Evangelista, Dr. Greg Valentino, Dr. Sierra Espuelas and Dr. Noel Cortez.

The reunion was also celebrated by the Adultenians, with spectacular presentations such as Golden, Class '57; Albee, Class '62, and Sapphire, Class '62 in the "Las Vegas Extravaganza." In the "Red, White & Blue Extravaganza" on Alumni Night Dinner Dance, the Ruby Class '67, Coral Class '72, and Pearl Class '77 were similarly honored.

# UE hosts work ethics forum

THE UE FORUM "MORE Ethics and Attitudes That Click," centered on right work values and attitudes and organized by the UE Guidance and Counseling Office is slated today, Sept. 17, at 1:30 a.m. at the UE Conference Hall, 4E Building, 2nd flr. Bldg.

Featured speaker is Francis J. Kong, one of the most sought-after speakers from the Asian Center for Trainers Speakers Bureau, an author of 11 books including the best selling "Only the Real Runners," an inspirational motivational speaker, a successful entrepreneur and president of Business Warriors, a non-stock, non-profit organization that seeks to make the Filipino receptive to the rapid global changes and equip him with the values and skills to make him a positive contribution to Philippine progress. Kong also inspires daily listeners to "Real-time Motivo," his daily radio program at 99.7 dzRH FM.

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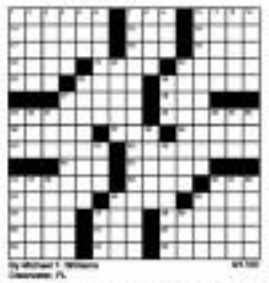
# To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

## DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Improper number
7 Chevy rival
11 Hannah's boy
14 "Sonnet -ina"
15 Bistro or Diablo
16 Fundamentalists' gofer
17 Scrubs
18 Beware of light
19 Highway entered
20 Hyperion, for one
21 Citizens' rights org.
23 Minister pawns
24 Green goddess
25 Strathairn roles
26 "Rock-a-bye-your-baby" composer
27 Quintessence
29 Alaska
30 Feeds
32 "Kiss" tough
33 Q
35 Warning signal
37 French sculptor
39 Peacock signature body
40 Obtained
41 Colorful shrub
44 Tax-sheltered acct.
45 "Lolita" director
46 Gold: Assoc.
48 Work capacity
50 Baton Rouge sch.
52 Not used
54 Bovine
56 Dicots
58 Heat watering
59 Surface sore
61 Hanks counter
62 Seven years
69 Composer Lehár
70 Lasting
71 Lamb genders
72 Actress Mirren
73 Fruits and Leaves

DOWN
1 Holding bones
2 Hit
3 Handsome in Bologna
4 Bow England
5 Nothing to it
6 Burgundy partners
7 Opposite of "Clothes 2"
8 Middle East fair
9 "Sanctuary" name
10 Mexican Jackson
11 Chess piece
12 Pigpen company
13 Amassed
22 Hawaiian partners
28 Tadpole plant with outboard thrusts
31 Casey Aguilar
33 Wizard's wood
34 Sports aid
36 Beach Boys hit
38 U.S. Army rank
39 Jesse Helms's state
41 Exercise Callisthenics
42 Deadlock question
43 Dream org.
47 Dividend
49 Hall of __ Fr.
51 PMS
53 Family man
57 Ted's Rodeo
60 Transportation
63 Cosmetic name
64 Quench, as thirst
65 Ms. Gabor
66 Lawyer's org.
67 Overboard
68 Not a __ Fr.
70 Languages of northern India
72 Special Weapons and Tactics org.
74 Contemporary
75 Cookware features
76 Where pen-ultimate
77 Anchors' cliff
78 Peninsula

By Michael T. Williams
Classification: PL

Mindanao Puzzle Solved

## CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

| | | | | | | | | |
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| 4 | | | 2 | 7 | | | | 1 |
| | | | 3 | | | | | |
| | 5 | 8 | | 3 | | | | |
| 7 | 9 | | 1 | | 6 | | 2 | 5 |
| | | | | 9 | | 1 | 4 | |
| | | | | | 9 | | | |
| 2 | | | | 5 | 1 | | | 3 |
| 6 | 8 | | | 2 | | | 9 | |

Difficulty Level ★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

## A. LIPIN

BY BOB ABRERA

Answer to previous puzzle

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 9 |
| 9 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| 3 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 8 |
| 8 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| 8 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| 7 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 5 |
| 1 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 2 |

## PUGAD BABOY

BY PH. LARACK

## LOVEWAYS

BY ELIZABETH CHONGCO

## ATOMIC AND WEBBY

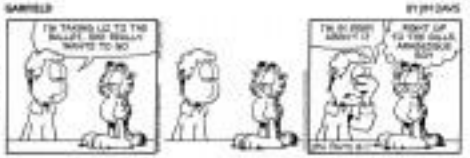
BY LYNN GARCELLANO

## KIKO MACHINE

BY MIKKO JARERO

## GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS




## HOROSCOPE

**ARIES (March 21 to April 20):** You're lively and ever ready to enjoy challenges. You may just feel the need to engage in some physical activity or work-out today.

**TAURUS (April 20 to May 20):** You might have a heart-to-heart discussion with someone about money matters. Financial situations or possessions you own. You feel you have to defend your position about something.

**GEMINI (May 21 to June 20):** You have lots of energy today and enjoy spending time doing with someone you love. However, you might have to compromise on something to make them happy.

**CANCER (June 21 to July 22):** You might be unusually angry and defensive today. You'll probably say things to others that you'll regret later. Try not to take anything personally.

**LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22):** Someone might ask you for advice today. Be careful what you say. You could be misunderstood. Don't be too critical of others.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22):** Someone might feel jealous about a decision you've made. Be careful not to hurt their feelings. You'll have to deal with a difficult person today.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22):** Watch the ways in which you express emotions, colleagues or social issues. You can't afford to be careless today. Be extra careful with your possessions.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21):** You have a lot of energy today. Be careful not to overdo it. Don't get involved in arguments or get involved in a fight or feel you can take your own

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21):** You have an urge to travel today. Be careful when you're feeling restless. You may have a hard time concentrating. Financial transactions may be positive day.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19):** Something you might have said or done could be upsetting you. You might be tested by others today. Friends are looking for ways to help you. Someone may be jealous of you.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18):** Don't get carried away with your enthusiasm today. Friends are becoming all the more dear to you. Be careful of the way you do things. You could run into unnecessary complications.

**PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20):** Routine assignments may frustrate easily today. Avoid this by not accepting the challenges. Be pleasant to others. Problems dealing with

# LIFESTYLE

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PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon

## Quiapo and the Filipino: Not exotic enough?

REMAINING scaled to the 21st century, old Quiapo residences are reused for commercial purposes.

FERNANDO NAMFEL ZIALCITA, a true Manileño from Quiapo, heads the National Heritage Academy. Previously at the Ateneo de Manila University while being deeply involved in Bahay Nakpil-Bautista, his family's 1914 landmark house in the heart of Quiapo, now a museum and community center.

A respected authority in the study of Philippine culture, he has recently published books, "Quiapo: Heart of Manila" and "Authentic though Not Exotic," are companion pieces that attempt to understand the causal, befitting Filipino regard toward the value of his culture and heritage.

In "Quiapo: Heart of Manila," Zialcita looks at Philippine heritage from the perspective of an inner Manila resident who has devoted years of effort to the revitalization of the district of his birth.

Quiapo was a riverside suburb south of Manila Uhen confined mostly to Intramuros in the 19th century that rose to prominence as the "city's heartland in the 20th century," always at the service of Manila activity.

Serious writers bring out the uniqueness of Quiapo as an urban district and its transformation into what it is today. Still Manila's central business area of crowded shopping areas and department stores, streets specializing in particular products (flowers, music, photography, optical goods, bills medicine, wedding supplies, downloaders' scenters, and so much more) radiate from grand Quezon Boulevard and from Quiapo Church at Plaza Miranda.

It is a pilgrimage center. "Outside the [Quiapo] church is the world of Plaza Miranda, the very center of magic in the entire country," while outside the precincts to the national center of political milieu.

"Quiapo has its flavors, too: a crunchy version of fruit lumpia, a tangy ham, and kalabasa."

The neighborhood is absolutely fascinating. Compact and highly complex, it surprises visitors with its wide range of traditional, multicultural offerings. It is also where people from all walks of life continue to live with in close contact of each other. How interesting it is that Quiapo has never lost its sense of being a neighborhood.

The district is what urbanists call an ensemble, a place that offers its residents all the services needed for their daily lives—work places, shops, markets, entertainments, schools, universities, places of worship and places of exploitation—all within walking distance.

Much of Quiapo has fallen into total disrepair. Its riverine network of streams, developed into esteros in the early 20th century, is now hopelessly clogged into stagnant pools.

People and vehicles compete what once were grand avenues and leafy streets. Hawkers illegally convert the few remaining open spaces into makeshift markets.

Houses, whether splendid mansions of the wealthy or modest working class dwellings, systematically deteriorate into dilapidation, many dismantled and substituted with cheap commercial architecture that degrades the heritage houses they have replaced.

### Urban lessons

Quiapo, now bursting at its seams, has morphed into an overpopulated city center district with all the attendant ills of social, economic and urban problems, each demanding immediate solution.

Quiapo is an urban lesson that holds upon the illusion that nothing remains the same. There is no room in present Quiapo reality for introducing romantic romanticism type conservation or restoration plans. With the economic, social and cultural pace of Quiapo today, old Quiapo, or even the Quiapo of just 20 years ago, is now memory that cannot ever return.

"Quiapo: Heart of Manila" demonstrates the distinct, resilient in history brings out its strengths, contributes to uniqueness among urban neighborhoods in the Philippines, and asks questions that must be answered to arrest ill-ban and social degeneration may further.

Admittedly, much work is needed by the government and, most importantly, its residents to slowly breathe new air into the moribund Quiapo, to reinvent it into a community that responds to the present and future needs of its residents, while also upgrading its economic, social and cultural image in a way that can be summed by 21st-century living.

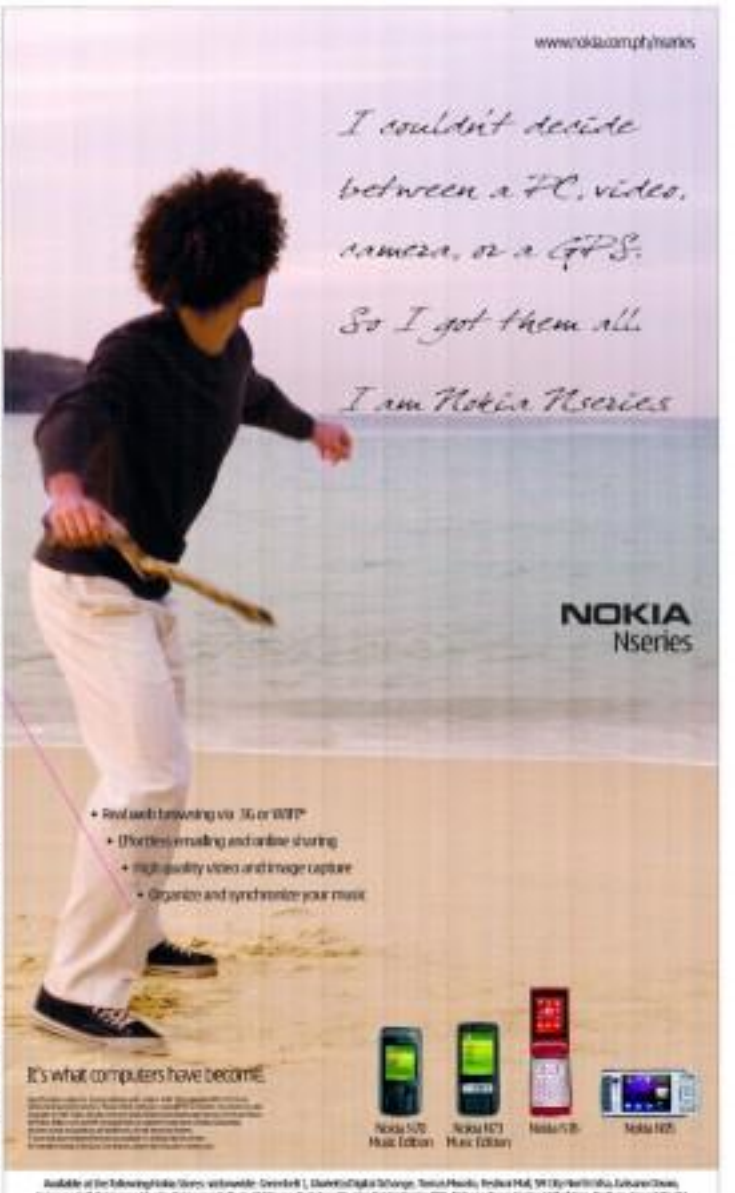
What cultural images are we looking for? That is the question asked by Zialcita in "Authentic though Not Exotic: Essays on Filipino Identity."

We have no vast temple complexes like Angkor in Cambodia or pre-Columbian pyramids like those built by the Mayas or Copán in Honduras. Neither do we have as edifice like or, a St. Peter's Basilica, or a Parthenon as monumental symbol of cultural achievement.

### Living monument

But we do have the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordillera, an immense system of

QUIMPO 02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# La Naval memorabilia on exhibit

THE BASILICA DE STO. DOMINGO OF Sto. Domingo Church and Convent in Quezon City is mounting the grand exhibit "La Naval Memorabilia Exhibit," which opens on Sept. 20. The exhibit is a fitting culmen to Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila on the occasion of her canonical coronation.

It is the last in a series of eight exhibitions which began in 2006 to commemorate the coronation. At the launching of the celebrations last year, the first exhibit, "La Virgen de Manila," enjoyed the incipient devotion to the child Mary in the Philippines. It was followed by "Salve Regina," which featured the various Marian images in the Philippines which have been canonically crowned.

Last December, the exhibit "Ahora adorans" focused on the very popular devotion to the Sto. Niño as depicted in statues as basic as plastic and carvings in wood and ivory and the many titles of the Child Christ the Philippines has venerated.

In March 2007, a back-to-back exhibit was mounted to honor St. Joseph, husband of Mary, in "San Jose, Esposo de la Virgen" and "Misterios Dolorosos," which featured various depictions of the suffering Christ coinciding with the season of Lent and Easter celebrations.

The sixth exhibit was organized last month to honor the saint of the rosary, Sto. Domingo de Guzman. "The exhibit focused on the life of St. Dominic and also included rosaries, prints and paintings of other Dominicans of the Order of Preachers.

The penultimate exposition opened last Sept. 6, feast of Mary's Nativity, and is still running at the Bautismo Rosario Parish of the University of Santo Tomas Campus in Espana, Manila, where the enamelled image of La Naval stayed for a while during the war. The exhibit features icons and photographs and gems of the virgin during its stay at UST and different images of the Santo Rosario as it evolved through the years.

The grand memorabilia exhibit will open on Sept. 20 and will run through the end of October. According to Fr. Ferdinand Rosario, OP, it was in 1907 when the venerated image of the Holy Rosary was crowned until the opening of the Filipino people. Our Lady of La Naval was the very first image honored with a canonical coronation by Pope Pius X.

The grand exposition will feature various

NUESTRA Señora del Rosario, La Naval de Manila

SCAPULARS in Tarsera Orden, circa 1920s, and prayer leaflet, 1950s.

FRAME with saker shells and a period silverplate of La Naval

GOTHIC pietapaxis in gilded silver and mop, Courtesy of Bel Nicolas

The exhibit caps the series of expositions organized in the run-up to the centennial of the canonical coronation of Our Lady of the Rosary in October

FR. BIENVENIDO Tirona, OP, prior of Sto. Domingo Convent

REI Nicolas, curator

La Naval Memorabilia from the collection of curator Bel Nicolas, who has been collecting devotional memorabilia about the La Naval since the 1980s.

A very nice programma y recuerdo of the 2007 Coronation was acquired by Nicolas from the Makati Cinema Square's memorabilia shop. A more recent find is a wooden fan of the Third Order of St. Dominic (circa 2000), which he found in an antique shop in Cubao, QC.

Commemorative medals are also included in the articles to be exhibited. An added attraction of this exhibit are some of the gifts given by the devotees and benefactors of the Schrein de La Naval.

Filipiniana and artworks depicting the La Naval dress by famous artists like Federico Aguilar and the late Cirilo Rivera of UST will be shown.

Production designers Chito Romero and Lino Mamaligas have also loaned their La Naval pieces and framed images for the exhibit.

The other members of the exhibit team are Tom Jovan, Jerome de Jesus, Noel Magsalin and Jun Hamilton.

In charge of research is Bro. Christopher Gastiguiza, OP, and assisted by Bro. Axel Salcedo, OP.

Invited to open the grand exhibit are Jovee Lim, Cherry Santos, Bonn Aaron Bas and Bel Nicolas.

Team Mercy Circle will receive congelated to Our Lady.

Fr. Leny Dagpin, OP, vicar provincial of the Dominican province of the Philippines, will be assisted by Fr. Bernardo Dagohoy, OP, chair of the ecumenical celebration committee; and Fr. Rene-rando Tirolla, OP, prior of Santo Domingo Convent, in opening the exhibit.

CAMOTE BIBE circa 1950s, and ceramic plates, circa 1971, from the collection of Fr. Ed Navarro, OP and Nicolas

# Quiapo and the Filipino . . .

From page E1

ave paddies carved into steep mountain slopes considered by world conservation experts as monuments on the scale of Angkor.

Mind sets the Ifaw Terraces of the Philippine Cordillera on a different level from ex-hinterlanders of Angkor. Another is that it is a living monument that continues to support life and a need today for the same purpose that it was built over two Millennium ago.

It are definitely of outstanding universal value that Unesco awarded on the World Heritage List and admired worldwide, many Filipinos continue to dismiss it.

Dakila observes that the world does not find the lowland Christian Filipino living the stereotyped Western image for us to the people. Therefore, we do not seem "exotic" enough, he writes, to the Westerner expecting to find "mysterious" Asia in Chinese, Japanese or Thai cultures that acquired, in Western consciousness, to be out of the ordinary.

Out of the ordinary are the tribal cultures, the rice terraces, the Muntanes who dance the singkil, the tattooing Bagbas. Tribal architecture, carving and weaving which "justify" an Asian and not-quite-Asian culture like the definitely-seven yrds, religious carving that combines Filipino motifs with Hindutu styles, or lowland Filipino cuisine that bears the local palate with Chinese and Spanish influences, are simply regarded as derivative of the West.

Dakila examines the effects of Spanish colonialism on the present Filipino psyche, responsible for "accusation that lowland Filipinos culture is 'diluted and derivative,' ... extensive opposite to joining 'East' and 'South-east Asia,' showing that though we should participate in both, we should realize that both concepts were invented by Westerners whose western minds to exclude 'Westernized peoples like us.'

Establishing restoring Filipino identity is today's global village is what Dakila advocates. He thoughts on how to achieve that recognition make "Authentic though Not Exotic" an extremely interesting read.

"Quiapo: Heart of Manila" is published by the Cultural Heritage Studies Program of Ateneo de Manila and the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, received publication grant the Toyota Foundation, Benito Soriano Zobel de Ayala, and Gregorio Araneta Social Development Foundations.

"Pathways through Intramuros" is published by the Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Intramuros Administration, a museum open to the public on 402 Beaterio St. off General Luna Boulevard, is definitely worth visiting. For information, call 7049341.

E-mail comments at pinkydaroy@gmail.com

CROWDED Quinta Market, among the largest city markets, is a landmark in Manila's premiere shopping district

QUIAPO streets, filled with shops and hawkers, attract people from all walks of Manila life

NINETEENTH-CENTURY houses, while struggling to survive, remind of Quiapo's past as the residential quarter for the city elite.

# *More than furniture*

MORE THAN A CHAIR MAP seem to be mere words that however would catch your curiosity. But more curious would be the furniture pieces displayed in the MTC showroom at Petron Lakeshore on North Luzon Expressway near the exit to Mabini-Pinagbarilan.

More Than a Chair (MTC) showroom has become a favorite site to shoppers and architects. But to furniture lovers and enthusiasts, MTC is a showroom of classy chairs and furniture.

MTC has a hands built heritage and brand. The synchronicity is inspired by Peranti consultant David Gunadel, who founded the first group of workers in 1998. The skills have been passed on and cultivated since then so the style has been preserved and even improved.

Why More Than a Chair? The name was given by Myra Bonin.

Jose Bonin explained: "Simply because we get more than it takes ... more than just ability and skills to make classy furniture and more than our commitment to product excellence."

The company has a mutual experienced and high caliber workers who live by the MTC commitment. The prices of the furniture products is reasonable and well within the reach even of middle-class Filipinos. The furniture are possibly locally made, with the best design and quality fit for homes, hotels and offices.

"MTC designs according to specified style and brand-name choice. That could be the reason why they keep coming to us because we please them and they are satisfied with our products," said Cherry Bonin, marketing head.

The company's strength is its excellent design and craftsmanship, using natural materials such as bamboo, T-mold, rattan, using real fabrics.

MTC began as a sub-contractor for its mother company, Bello Grillo, Inc.

In 1999 MTC joined the Philippine International Furniture Show. The experience gained in the market was useful market, and before long became chairs begun coming in.

It will join the "Manila Show" exhibit in March 2008.

MTC also answers the local market. It is always ready and able to supply high quality, innovative and competitively priced furniture.

MTC is committed to make quality products based on buyer's specifications. It's corporate environment is based on career growth, productivity, sense of ownership, teamwork and adaptability to change.

MORE than a Chair showroom at Petron Lakeshore on North Luzon Expressway

# Celebration of form

"THE PIONEER," by Carlos Ortega

The fellowship of Filipino sculptors convene in a spectacle of form and substance

By Johnathan Libaw to Rotaldes
Contributor

"I AM NOT A GLASS ARTIST."

Three words would not have been as shocking had they not come from Ramon Orbino, an artist much acclaimed here and abroad for his luminous works in translucent glass.

"I am a sculptor," he is quick to add, implying that artists are best defined by what they do rather than what materials they use.

Orbino's revelation is received with great amusement by his fellow sculptors at a recent gathering to discuss their forthcoming exhibit, "Forces of Form," opening at the Megamall Art Center on Sept. 21. The annual exhibit, now on its third year, is presented by Gallery Sine and is envisioned as a review of contemporary sculpture in the Philippines.

Apart from his signature glass pieces, Orbino will showcase new works in bronze, an interesting departure that highlights the artist's breadth and proves his point about reductionist conceptions of art and artists based on mediums.

"Medium separations are important," he says, "to show an artist's development, long may it/not/ripe for a rush."

Other participating artists in the review include Napoleon Abueva, Willie Cid, Bernabe Ed Castrillo, Solomon Saprid, Claudio Tayag, Michael Cacnio, Cedric Ortega, Robert Oliveros, Roy Pus-Conderan, Juan Engkl Imson, Bayani Imson, based de la Cruz and Igal Fernandez.

## Art of form

As such, the show is meant as much for the public as it is for the growing community of Filipino sculptors whose collaborative engagements have in the born first and for between.

At the exhibit, the works of mounted as well as emerging sculptors and installation artists working with a wide array of media—from glass to metal, brass to bronze, wood to scrap and other found materials—will be showcased and are contingent on the well-deserved admiration for the wealth of Filipino talent engaged in the art of form.

For other sculptors working with brass like Garcia and Ortega, the annual review is an opportunity to take stock how talent. Cacnio's very memorable installation in last year's exhibit, a cooperative effort of assistant artists revealed the hassles of its fun, was a stark contrast to his idyllic rendition of innocent children at play.

Garcia, a Tec Outstanding Young Man (TOYM) of the Philippines awardee, sees the review as a learning ground for his more conceptually-rich sculptures. This year, his metal hands have given life to similarly arresting pieces that focus on Filipino resiliency and human sensibilities in the post-modern divide.

"I want to focus on the qualities and conditions that make us 'who we are,'" Garcia says. "At the same time, I also want to celebrate Filipino talent and achievements."

Apart from his contribution to the group show, the sculptor is also scheduled to stage a solo exhibit in Ayala Museum.

Ortega, a Bulakenyo born artist now based in San Pablo, Laguna, forays into the Mindanao of his youth and renders in his sculptures a fitting homage to the rugged men who cultivated the southern frontier in the first half of the 1900s. The brass works of nude figures depict the tall, taut historical allusions to the sea, land, and carabao as instruments for taming what was then termed as the "Promised Land."

Ortega is an entrepreneur-architect-turned-sculptor whose shift to the arts began only a couple of years ago. He now continues to an revolving love affair with brass.

"Brass is so forgiving; your mistakes are almost always forgiven," he says. "Many sculptors engaged in sculpture, reviews her Edsa goddess for the exhibit.

The sculptors installation, first exhibited at the Ateneo Rotunda 10 years ago, will be juxtaposed against her new works in bronze, signaling the aesthetic as well as personal shifts in her 25-year career in art.

"DRAGONFLYINGS," by Ruby Ratajkak

"WOODSCAPES," by Grace Taylor

## Women sculptors

"Sculpture is made more difficult for women," Orbino explains, "because it is very physical."

She recalls that when she was pregnant, she was "sculpting dysfunctionally, so as not to upset the baby." The thrusts of birthing and the many odysseys of the feminine spirit thus figure prominently in Arellano's works and that of her women peers.

Aside from Arellano, the other participating women sculptors include Tala Isla Casanova, Grace Taylor and Ruby Ratajkak.

The increase in submissions for this year's exhibit is a telling sign that sculpture in the country is a dynamic discipline with growing support. Rod Aranjuez, president of the Sculptors Association of the Philippines and an artist who uses scrap metal and other found objects, observes that more and more Filipinos are appreciating these dimensional art.

"Dati maiisipin ang ng iba-ibang bahit dito ang mahal ng works ito sa/sementong ang mga lang ng mga dito ng mga/ito ng ginawa," he recalls. "But now, more people understand that a work of art is more than the sum of its parts; it is the creative idea that distinguishes the artist from the artisan."

Orbina agrees with Aranjuez for/now/there is/much younger sculptors to know every aspect of their craft.

"Ang sculptor dapat marunong mag-welding, mag-carpentry, labas," he says. "Ang sculptor dapat Jack-of-all-trades, para master of sculpture."

"Forces of Form: The 3rd Annual Gallery Sine Review of Philippine Contemporary Sculpture" opens Sept. 21 in Art Space, 4/F, SM Megamall, and runs through Oct. 7. Call 9106616.

E-mail the author at rarbrondes@gmail.com.

"Dancing Buddha," by Ortega

Turn to page H4

# Tender Mother . . .

"MAHADIAZ"

"SACRED Heart"

"GUADALUPE"

### Community program

So I started a community project at our weekend farm to help him out. My simple goal was to develop Ate's talents as a stone artisan, by challenging him to refine his skills in stone carving and helping develop a bigger market for these garden sculptures in Manila.

We decided our farm should be Marian images. Because we are a Catholic country, I believe every home with a garden should have the image of Mama Mary. Just as Thailand gardens are adorned with the image of Buddha, Japanese gardens with pagodas, and Chinese gardens with stone lion dogs, I believe ours should be adorned with the image of Our Lady.

In March 2007, I showed our early works to one of the founding members of Friends in Art (Fia), Ate. She was shocked by what she saw, and decided to show pictures of our works to her organization.

Fia members remodeled on the tender love in the sculptured faces of Our Lady. "Her smile is captured in stone," they said. Fia invited us to produce at least 30 pieces for exhibition and sale during the organization's annual "Art Market" show on Sept. 8.

### Personal tribute

This endeavor, I thought, will allow me to pay personal tribute to Our Lady.

My wife, Milagros, has had a debilitating brain injury for close to 13 years now. She is completely paralyzed, and has lost her ability to speak. Like an infant, she is completely dependent on the people around her for all her needs. In spite of the severity of her brain injury, she is fully aware of everything around her.

Mila is living proof that miracles do happen. She was born when her mother Marilyn was 45, and already had three miscarriages before her. When Marilyn found out she was pregnant with Mila, her doctor told her that, at her age and with her medical history, she should not get her hopes up on her pregnancy.

So she prayed to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, for her safety and the health of the child in her womb. Mila surprised all by being born at full term, perfectly normal and healthy. In thanksgiving, her mother named her Milagros.

AVE'S Portrait

When Mila gave birth to her own daughter on Oct. 28, 1996, she unexpectedly went into a life-threatening seizure due to amniotic fluid embolism (AFE). She went into a coma, and had to be revived. The doctors called a Code Blue to save her, and put her on life support. She bled uncontrollably and had to undergo emergency surgery.

Most mothers afflicted by AFE do not survive the ordeal. But Mila lived. In thanksgiving, we named her daughter Mary Theresa Milagros.

Mila lived, but lay in a deep coma, with very little brain activity. Two weeks into her coma, her neurologist gave us a grim prognosis. She will be severely brain damaged, in a permanently vegetative state for the rest of her life, and that her chances of waking up was only one in two percent.

### Miracle of life

And so we prayed to Our Lady for Mila, praying particularly to Our Lady of Guadalupe whose image was prominently displayed at the hospital lobby. Living up to her name, Mila defied medical statistics and miraculously woke up from her coma four weeks after her overdose.

On Oct. 3, 1996, she was discharged from the hospital "awake" but with severe neurological deficits. She was paralyzed, she has her ability to speak, she could not see, she could not eat or drink, she could not recognize her own name.

Yet, in spite of Mila's fragility, she continues to be with us today. She has remained alive strongly, she can see through her mouth when opens fed, she recognizes her name, she smiles beautifully and laughs heavily.

Through this Marian exhibit, we honor Mila for teaching us how to bear suffering with dignity, courage and cheerfulness. Through this exhibit, we thank Our Lady and Our Mother for taking care of us. We celebrate the miracle of life in Mila, and the miracle of life in us all.

Friends in Art, Inc., in cooperation with the Alabang Garden Club, invites you to the "Art Affair" exhibit of Marian-inspired Stone Sculptures from the Ukit Milagros Workshop. Exhibit runs until Sept. 23, at 161 University Ave., Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa. Call 8817 8312/0827 or e-mail avesculpture@gmail.com.

"PERFECT LIVING"

# Tender Mother, *in stone we carve our thanks*

By Nicel A. Mercado
Contributor

I'VE ALWAYS HAD A PASSION for stone sculptures. I would find them at roadside garden stalls near our weekend home in Laguna, and at garden ornaments together with plants.

What I love about them is that they look better as they age, as moss starts growing on the stone. I wonder how anyone could shape figures out of such hard river stones, and admire the artistry of Filipinos.

So I went in search of the La-

"MOTHER and CHILD" detail

guna stone artisans. It took me several years to find one. When I did, I was surprised by his youth, and his lean frame, not one you would imagine could work with heavy stones.

He is Ben Sandoval. He learned how to carve stone from his father, who started out as an agent scouting for antiques from farms to farms, and selling them to antique dealers.

When the demand for antique mills gave because of landscapers, the eldest Sandoval tried his hand at making them himself, and was quite successful. His replica stone mills became a hit, prompting him to search for tools to increase his output.

As the market became saturated with replicas, the artisans started experimenting with other forms of stone sculpture. Forms they would see in their natural environment, such as frogs, lizards, turtles.

When the elder Sandoval retired, it was his wife who continued the trade. But work was seasonal and unpredictable. To make ends meet, he would take on odd jobs as construction worker, gardener, security guard, whatever he could find.

(more)

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*Sitti Brings Life Again to the City*
*"My Bossa Nova" Album Launch*
Listen to the Bossa Nova Queen's new soothing songs during her " My Bossa Nova" Album Launch on September 30.

LIFESTYLE

# The legacy of Luciano Pavarotti

## Pavarotti's singing is anchored on sound technical grounding and sensitive artistry

ITALIAN opera star Luciano Pavarotti waves to spectators during his concert at Red Square in Moscow in this Sept. 7, 1997 file photo. Hailed by many as the greatest tenor of his generation, he died on Sept. 6, after a long battle with cancer. Pavarotti. AFP/FILE

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI (1935-2007) had reached a larger audience than any of today's operatic celebrities through not only the legitimate stage but also television. He was the first singer to really tap the media, notably TV for opera and music.

It was in 1959 when his recital at the Metropolitan Theater in New York was beamed live on a Sunday at 4 p.m. that was seen by an estimated 12 million viewers. This was followed by many more, among which were the celebrated performances he shared with two other tenors, Jose Carreras and Placido Domingo dubbed "Three Tenors Concert."

In March 1994, the country's music lovers heard him in a concert at the Philippine International Convention Center, sponsored by billionaire "Baby" Aquino. The concert had to be rescheduled as Pavarotti had a terrible bout with cold. Barely recovered from it, he braved through the concert and emerged triumphant.

I witnessed how the audience gave him generous applause, so he managed to sing through the high notes without any hitch, even if it was obvious his vocal production did not carry the usual brilliant sheen.

Earlier, at the press conference, I was stunned by the humility as he expressed his ardent desire to sing for a charitable cause, sounding more like a philanthropist than a self-centered diva.

It was a memorable concert, indeed. The country's music lovers had that singular opportunity to listen to him live. While he expressed that he called "chocolate voice," or the rich and robust texture of a lyric tenor, like that of Giuseppe di Stefano whom he admired so much, his "white" or light textured voice allured simply because of its natural agility to go up the high register.

In 1972, he became the darling of opera buffs in New York after scorching from the high C nine times over in Donizetti's rare an opera "La Fille du Regiment." Since then, he had earned the sobriquet "King of the High C."

### Rules of singing

Like many other singers, Pavarotti believed in some fundamental rules in singing. Knowing those basics is the key in understanding classical singing and appreciating his singing even more. These he outlined and discussed in an article he wrote, "On Singing and Interpretation."

First is the "breathing." Good singing comes from the diaphragm, which is the lungs—in one evening, and in one life—without the signs of strain."

Next is the placement, which he termed passaggio (passage). This is the ability to shift from one register to the next—lower, middle and high—with control to the slightest hint of change.

He wrote: "Every singer has not one voice, but

SEE ARIAS/F4

Connected in Paradise

As the Internet integrates more and more with the day-to-day lifestyle of most people, expectations of what a hotel stay should offer shift to include increasingly indispensable access to Internet services. Gone are the days of having to search out Internet cable at the business center in order to stay connected. It is now common for travelers to bring their laptops, or Internet-ready PDAs, along with them, and they expect their hotels to have the infrastructure necessary to connect their devices.

This is true not only for business travelers, whose need for Internet access is obvious. Even on vacation as tourist leaders also appreciate the ability to check email, upload photos of their trip, and download maps.

"LR White once said, 'Everything in life is somewhere else, and you get there in a car.'" said PLDT SVP and Head of Corporate Business Group Eric R. Alberto. "This was in 1961. In our era, everything in life – even when you are on vacation – is within your reach, and you get there through the Internet...people want that ability wherever they go."

Hoteliers are very much aware of this demand.

"Internet access is one of the top three priorities for travelers, even for those going to leisure destinations," says Mr. Philippe Barthelemy, general manager for the Intercontinental Manila. Friday's. "They want convenience – they want access to their rooms."

Mr. Barthelemy estimates that in recent years, he's seen a nearly 100-percent increase in demand for Internet access in Friday's. To satisfy this demand, he had outfitted Friday's with PLDT's Internet solution for hotels, PLDT Post. Specifically designed to provide hotels with a way to give their guests Internet access, both wireless and wired with seamless connectivity from rooms to common areas and back again.

Thanks to the Intercontinental Manila's PLDT Post, Friday's guests enjoy wireless access in all rooms of the resort and in the famous restaurant area, despite the difficulties of setting up access near the beach. They can access the Internet from their rooms, without needing to configure their laptops for specialized access. They can also bring their laptops out onto the beach and customize access with them, and their access continues seamlessly, operating on the same account, instead of needing to set up multiple accounts and having to log on and off continuously.

Most resorts in Boracay, having realized the necessity of Internet access, are wired to some extent, but few have the comprehensive package that Friday's offers.

"Having Internet access," adds Mr. Humphrey D'Costa, chairman and president of the Hotel and Restaurants Association of the Philippines, an organization whose biennial assembly on the Future of Tourism in BP was sponsored by PLDT Post, "is necessary for the future of tourism in the Philippines."

Shown in photo from L-R: Philippe Barthelemy, Friday's Boracay General Manager and HRAP Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines (HRAP) Biennial Assembly Chairman; Fay Dumpit, PLDT Port Product Manager; and Josephine D'Leany M. General Manager of Copa Intercontinental Boracay and HRAP President

MANINGNING AWARDS FOR POETRY

# Mid-autumn festival of music and verse

By Alma Cruz Mickz
Contributor

THE DAY OF THE full moon of the Eighth Month of the Chinese calendar this year is fast approaching. On this night, the moon is said to be at its biggest and brightest. It is worshipped and/or celebrated in festivities marking the Mid-Autumn Festival. The night after, on Sept. 20, the Maningning Awards for Poetry will be celebrated at the Philamlife Theater.

Moon worship among different cultures started in primeval times. For the Chinese, changes of the moon as it waxes and wanes relate to the transcendes of life joy in coming together and sorrow in parting. A legend has it that Chang-E, the Moon Goddess, was actually a young princess. Left heartbroken upon the departure of her betrothed to the heavens, she took a magic elixir that enabled her to fly to the moon and stay there forever. During the bright autumn moon, people remember Chang-E. Her sorrowful flight... and her joy of reuniting...the two lovers in the sky at night.

The Chinese actually started formally celebrating mid-autumn as a festival only during the Zhou dynasty (1066-221 BC). Meanwhile, secretly moonlitting moon cakes as an appropriate shimmer in the festivities first appeared in Jiuchen's Song (1127-1279). Moon cakes were baked to be given as gifts to relatives to express their wishes for a united family. The festival remained the second most popular, next only to the New Year's festivities, despite upheavals and changes of dynasties, governments and rulers.

CYNTHIA Alexander Sonas Fernandez and Girl Valencia

## Celebrating life

Personally, I have considered September as the anniversary of my life since the year 2000 when my much beloved eldest daughter, Maningning, joined the goddess Chang-E to live Right to the moon. Just like the 100 believers of festivals, I have tried to transform my grief into a celebration: a celebration of my daughter's short life well lived.

In 1987, my China-born Maningning held her first solo exhibit of Chinese paintings entitled "Maningning: An Exhibit of Chinese Brush Works" at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The 23-year-old artist, the youngest ever exhibited at CCP that year, was also a triple grand prize and prizes for her exhibit, of acrylic to Chinese ink and brush, showed her diaphine in St. Joint Bon (four hundred of a Gentleman the bamboo, orchid, plum blossom and chrysanthemum).

THE MCLAF family's account of their China swap won the National Book Award in biography

In 1992, her representational oil painting in memory style entries, "Double in Paradise," was awarded grand prize and Chinese still be awarded P50,000 each, a Julio Ulloa sculpture trophy, and special limited hardbound edition of "Notes from the Underworld: A Book of Verses" (Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2006) was finalist in the Manila Critics Circle's National Book Award.

Twenty years after her first painting exhibit and seven years after the first Maningning Awards for Poetry (Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2000

# Doggone classical concert

By Dexter B. Macilo
Contributor

Top classical artists team up in a benefit concert to raise funds for the training of search-and-rescue dogs

DOGS WILL ALWAYS be man's best friend. But ask Kumiko Kuroda, and she'll tell you they can be more, as this year's "Dog Day Afternoon" (DDA) benefit concert would prove. Kuroda, along with Retzel Spelts and Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) chair and Sen. Richard Gordon co-chair this year's fundraiser, which will be an elegant soiree of light classical music on Sept. 22 at the Kuroda residence in Cavinta, Forbes Park, Makati.

Just as it was last year, proceeds of DDA 2007 will be used to fund the training of search-and-rescue dogs of the Philippine K9 Search and Rescue (PHISAR) Foundation. Also benefiting will be Project 143, a PNRC project that trains 43 volunteers in every barangay nationwide.

Dazzling relative how the PHISAR dogs were able to locate hidden hams during the fundraiser, Lyra Lambino and the Lumbalan, Alley Medalla last year. Prior to that, the dogs were also a critical factor during the search-and-rescue mission for the missing five family of Senior Senior Secretary Ronaldo Puno in the December 2004 Quezon Province mudslide operation.

PHISAR began as a dream by a group of civic-minded people and dog trainers, and breeders who recognize dogs' peculiar talents to search and rescue.

Spelts, who was then approached by the group, became instantly committed (together with husband, Ambassador Paul Spelts).

Bringing together other like-minded personalities led to the establishment of PHISAR.

The foundation, an organizational member of the National Association for Search and Rescue (Nasar) which is based in the United States, is the first and only BYDOG group in Asia and a partner and affiliate of various government and non-government agencies such as the Office of Civil Defense, Philippines Coast Guard and PNRC.

Private institutions and entities too have given PHISAR handlers and their dogs "mission-ready" status.

To qualify, a volunteer handler must be at least 21 years old, of good moral character, physically and mentally fit, at least a high-school graduate, able to commit to the foundation, one pet along with other volunteers, and must have a relationship with their dog outside of the training.

Qualified handlers undergo various training such as the International Red Cross Basic Life Support, Mass Casualty Incident, Basic Mountaineering Course, Canine First Aid, Field Search Procedures.

Meanwhile, the dogs have to be at least 12 months old, fit and exposed to different smells, noises, intelligent, trainable, transportable, show natural scenting ability, and of good temperaments.

According to PHISAR president Jaleene Erwin Bitay Jr., the dogs have the ability to smell people who may be buried 60-100 feet below the ground depending on the conditions.

"Dogs' smelling abilities are higher than any instrument at technology available today," Bitay Jr. said. "In the event that a major earthquake happens, or any disaster for that matter, hopefully with the help of the dogs, we can help save a lot of lives."

CHAIRMAN and First Lady Lucy Gordon with their love (a Bumiko Kuroda).

GREG Zuniga CRISTINE Cuenco RENATO Lucia

RICHARD Gordon explains the need for additional dog and volunteer handlers to the author and (from left) PHISAR's Noel Lim, Kuroda and Antonia Loyzaga of the Manila Observatory

### Classical music concert

A couple of research has been done to determine how dogs react to certain kinds of music. Results were the same from both United Kingdom and Northern Ireland—dogs tend to be rowdy and noisy when subjected to heavy metal music while better behaved when listening to classical music.

Which makes the "Dog Day Afternoon" a perfect fit for dog lovers and classical music aficionados alike.

Guests will be treated to performances of some of the best musicians and singers such as Christine Cuenco, Greg Zuniga, Renato Lucia, Dong de Otto, Margarita Tuko-Cuenco and Orchestra Filipina, to a recorded concert artist and teacher.

Considered by critics as "the pianist's pianist" and "patron of the piano," Cuenco studied with legendary pianists and pedagogue Rosario Picazo at Sta. Isabel College and went to people of Jacob Lateiner at the Juilliard School in New York City.

Zuniga is considered as one of the country's most versatile musicians.

He pursued further studies at the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory and finished his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at the Royal College in London and was pronounced the prestigious Tagore Gold Medal by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

Lucia, who teaches at the UST Conservatory of Music and is the acting resident conductor of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, has had recent appearances as a guest conductor of the Philippine Philharmonic during its European and Japan tours as well as performances with the Brno Philharmonic of the Czech Republic.

De Otto, also a professor at the UST Conservatory, is a concert guitarist while Cuenco is a Rosa Peralta and Cirilo Schor- or in voice and the Philippines' top coloratura soprano.

"The afternoon will be a high-quality classical concert," Kuroda said. "(By raising funds) it will help the PHISAR help Filipinos affected by disasters... to rebuild their lives."

Call 02.4475546.

*E-mail the author at dexmail@inquirer.com*

## Quaching the Luce..

From page F1

enough to consider.

Quaich, who met Luce in Saigon to Chinese parents and who had made her conducting debut in 1968 with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra 20s. Her woman even appointed as the post, had retired from active conducting a few years back after she had an electrocution accident, after which she also deteriorated she had breast cancer.

She chose to bow out from a career that had had leading some of the best orchestras in the world. She opted to convalesce in her home in Sydney, Australia where she would do Lucia such the disease, receiving to fund herself with chemotherapy, radiotherapy, adding herself only to the optimal one-year.

The experience had left her a gentler soul, a perfect contrast to a temperamental reputation that had earned her the title "the lady tyrant of the podium," dressed in fashionable extravagant or minister, her hair in Chinese bob.

That was not evident much, however. Her mentor, the famous Leonard Bernstein, called her a maestro with "[sharp] rhythmic mind... [quick] reflexes, her address to the orchestra is clear."

The lady and her ongoing brilliant eyes remain, although the extravagant is gone, replaced Friday night with a tailored dress in neutral black, punctuated at the hem with a rose gold patch of gold. The natural consideration must pale of course to the music she wrought from the Manila Symphony Orchestra. She made something a night's excursion through classical music, commanding the Luce stage like the Asian queen she was, and continually is.

## The legacy of Luciano Pavarotti

From page F1

three different voices—a lower, a middle and an upper. When you are singing and move from one of these voices up to the other, there is often a noticeable changing of gears."

"You can hear where the voice is moving from one of these vocal areas—can call them registers,—as the next. Now, to master a good passage or placement, the singer learns where these changes occur, and works to connect them with exercises so that the vocal change is as small as possible."

This is what the term "line" is associated with, which also means no one more important considerations, the legato and portamento.

The former means "smoothly connected," and the latter, "to carry or bring the note up or down." In singing, legato is best shown with the exercise commonly of one tone to the other. It is from this that a flowing standard line is achieved.

On the other hand, the portamento must be used wisely. Pavarotti's does not mean "swooping," which is the "jumping from one note to the other, and sliding to the next." Its execution is indicated in the score, but most of the time a tradition in performances indicates in the score, even if it is not indicated in the score.

On top of these considerations comes "consonant tones."

This was very obvious in Pavarotti's singing in all his concerts. Easily detected were his still posture and serious facial expression suggesting a powerful concentration, as he sustained a difficult phrase or sustained a high note. But consonant tones, he said, "will not produce good results if there is nothing in the head and the heart to concentrate with."

Here is where technique and artistry come in. The breathing and passages he uses the traditional info, while the phrasing, legato singing and portamento are the artistic side—are key lessons which Pavarotti had ably demonstrated in his performances.

His execution of the cadenza, that dramatic ornamentation that usually ends an aria to show the capability or virtuosity of the vocal instrument had always awed his listeners. He capably held high notes in long duration, and ably sustained the last note. Even better, his top notes were secure, vibrant, ringing and well-rounded.

All these things make up what beautiful singing is all about, otherwise known as bel canto.

### Crowning glory

Of course, there is much more to be desired in appreciating operatic arias. This is not the end of it all. But this begs the question: For what does a singer train if such a singer cannot hit the high notes? And in opera the top notes are the singer's crowning glory, vocal engineering.

Thus, Pavarotti said, one can sing "badly" all evening, but "voice is strong" to the high C's and "the public will forgive everything." On the other hand, one can sing beautifully but a "crack" in top notes will "ruin the whole evening."

It is with these considerations that one, indeed, listens to Pavarotti, whose effortless rendition of the best arias evoked from the world's literate operas and those affecting Neapolitan songs, which he championed a cause in less higher, makes one's listening to him more pleasurable.

Pavarotti's singing is thus anchored on a sound technical grounding and sensitive artistry.

The art of beautiful singing is not achieved by just opening the mouth and loudly belting out vocal notes as some singers would do it. These types of singers do not last, and the irony of it is, as an early age, their voices are spent.

For those whose singing is honed on a bit and into basic, their voices also easily vanish, especially when they quit schooling. Not in the case of Pavarotti, and the other bel canto singers whose voices last longer as they are technically honed correctly, and properly taken care of.

These are the legacies Pavarotti has left when he went to the Great Divide on Sept. 6. Born on Oct. 12, 1935, he gloriously sang and touched his listeners' hearts for over five decades.

He shared his music not only for one's listening pleasure but also for humanitarian purposes. He did not keep to himself privileged technique nor of those selfishness, but shared it to many aspiring singers as well.

Long live the King of the High C!

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BALLET MANILA'S 'SWAN LAKE'

# A classic warhorse returns

BALLERINAS of Ballet Manila with prima ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde

BALLET MANILA MOUNTS THE most demanding of the classic "warhorses"—"Swan Lake."

The production will open Sept. 28, 7:30 p.m., at Aliw Theater. Top billed by prima ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde, who has danced the most difficult twin roles of Odette/Odile in no less than 23 full-length performances all over the world, "Swan Lake" will surely enthrall the audience as it showcases the unparalleled classical skills the BM dancers have developed over years of rigorous training in the unmodified Vaganova method.

"When you see the term 'tradition,' you picture the massive ordinaries—strong, surely reliable even in the favored of battles, don't even in awareness," said Macuja-Elizalde. "Not us. 'Swan Lake' is like that stallion. Over the centuries, it has remained both a prestigious ballerina and a formidable yardstick for classical ballet companies. Ballet Manila is proud to be the only company in the Philippines with enough strong and competent dancers to perform this full-length masterpiece."

Restaged for the third time by Pacific's Artist of Russia and Former Kirov Ballet premier dancer Sergey Vikulov, Ballet Manila's "Swan Lake" features new choreographic sections specially designed to highlight the impressive skills of his young Filipino dancers.

Guarding was provided by Russian Ballet Academy mentor Tatiana Golubeskova, who paid special attention to BM's "swans" and corps de ballet work.

Imparting the role of Prince Siegfried is guest artist Alastair Chamberlayne, formerly of the Mariinsky (Kirov) Ballet and now principal soloist of the Munich Ballet. He was last seen dancing opposite Macuja-Elizalde in last year's production of "La Bayadere."

Other performances will feature the "Swan Lake" debut of BM "princes" Rudy de Dios and Mauer Sil-pada at Siegfried, and soloists Mylene Aggabao and Marion Nicanor alternating as Odette/Odile.

This celebration in dance also provides a fitting send-off to the Ballet Manila dancers who will represent the Philippines in the Gyeongju World Performing Arts Festival at the Gyeong World Culture Expo 2007 in Korea Oct. 19-27, under the auspices of ICPC-Unesco NGO.

"Swan Lake" performances are scheduled Sept. 28-30 and Oct. 5-7 at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Call 5213967 or 4945008.

"BAYADESQUE." Ernest Mandigo in "Kitri."

BM in Tony Fabella's "Dancing to Czerny," which evokes the atmosphere of a Paris Opera House

## Mix of avant-garde and classical

Ballet Manila's 'Halo-Halo 2: Sayaw Pinoy atbp.' shows the past and future of ballet

By Elisa Kyosia B. Requiros
Contributor

IT WAS NO SMALL shock to see a very different ballet Manila (BM) in its 12th season opener, "Halo-Halo 2," at the Aliw Theater.

Once described by dance luminary Edna Vida as a classical ballet company "whose roots are firmly grounded in the Russian Vaganova soil," BM seems to have successfully replaced the eclectic beats of European-inspired touches dancers in half of the night's bill who bend classically.

First-night audiences were still raving nonstop about the "impressive" production more than 45 minutes after the show ended.

Each of BM's dancers was admirable in guest choreographer Ernest Mandigo's avant-garde ballets (read: fun-not, indoor/outside themes) "Mix Amateur" (my favor) and "Here" (dreams), which premiered that evening.

Being renowned soloists, accomplished ballet dancers and naughty Marian Anselmo excelled in their respective lead roles in "Mix Amateur," which is a collection of disconnected displaying various moods from to mention joining across like Beatrice's line with a fellow female dancer) with the help of bossa nova, jazz, tango, mambo and hustle/disco disco music.

Both bedazzled with Lisa's charm and sensual adagio movements as "Bachelor" images flashed in a big white screen overhead.

Humor mingled with pomp as many laughed at BM schedule Henry Strutz's funny antics as a spotted gay lover.

Company member Yuri Mendoza and apprentices Catherine Urmeneta and Michael Divinagracia were a joy to watch as well, but they still looked a bit shy.

Nevertheless, the three succeeded in handled the difficulties and carried repetitive applause, especially for the moving midnight playhouse scene.

STRONG technique. Lisa Macuja-Elizalde in Sergey Vikulov's "Night."

### Love quadrangle

Vikulov's minimalist but dramatic "Night," which is loosely based on one of Poe (the Duncgeville's novels, is compressed into a sad love quadrangle between The Dreamer, The Girl, The Lover, and The Stranger.

Yes further laurels are needed for BM premiere dancer and principal dancer Lisa Macuja-Elizalde as she framed The End with absolute certainty.

The prima ballerina, who recently obtained her diploma in Bachelor of Science in Management from University of Phoenix Online (Distance Learning), was never let. Her movements still fluid and with stylishness still strong, Macuja-Elizalde received reverent ovations from the audience.

The female corps did not let themselves be ignored. Although a supporting cast for the "ballerina of the masses," they were united and exact in their movements as a white bloc, reminiscent of the swan/ballet Willis in the classic/ballet "Giselle."

Rudyard Rudy de Dios as The Dreamer has vastly improved as theatrical expressiveness as he was able to make each play of emotions—hope, fear and hurt—apparent.

As The Stranger, company member Francis Castillo (in lavender tights) did a memorably portrayal while bullying Macuja-Elizalde and De Dios' characters. Sharon Eduvino was a stylish portrait of The Lover. It was a pity though that his scenes were scarce.

Almost an hour long, "Night," which was cut in the haunting symphony No. 5 by Jean Sibelius, was a bit clingy for the mostly decontrolled, modern dancing audiences (a disappointing reality for gala nights that need to be dress-up affairs). But it was well-applauded at curtain call.

### Elegantly thrilling

Fabella's closer spot, "Dancing to (Giuseppe) Verdi," was set against what seemed like an equally grand mise-en-scene of the Paris Opera House, complete with a gigantic chandelier and sets of ribbed lighted curtains. "Dancing to (Carl) Czerny" was an elegantly thrilling finale with Fabella's famous "cast of hundreds."

The company, wearing white and gold, moved in unison and made the simple steps look clean and grandiose.

Macuja-Elizalde let loose a round of her signature series of pirouettes and chaînés, equaled by none reminiscent of Svetlana Zakharova's (known not by name, Faustina and Aggabao, to the delight of the audience.

Ballet Manila continues its 12th season with "Swan Lake" on Sept. 28-30 and Oct. 5-7; "Pinocchio" and "Nutcracker" in December; and "Le Corsaire" in February.

MARIAH Faustina with charming Francisco, Marian Divinagracia, Espejo and comical Henry Strutz in "Mix Amateur"

JUDGE Espejo, ballet Carrie Ms. Francisco in Mandigo's avant-garde ballet "Here."

MYLENE Aggabao and Nelo Generoso cut their coolest entry, "Diana et Actaeon"

# ENTERTAINMENT

Was Willie suspended?

"INDIVISIBLE" TV host Willie Revillame was reportedly slapped with a three-day suspension for his outburst against Anjo delos of the reality show "Eat Bulaga" on Aug. 29. Sweetnet talk say the suspension extended with Willie's scheduled trip to Las Vegas. ABS-CBN Corporate Communications head Olivia Cenabre told Inquirer there was no truth to the rumor. —Bernard B. Gino

**TRADITIONAL THEME** Classic silhouettes seemed to be the fashion order of the evening at the 10th Gawad Urian rites on Thursday, and the ladies seemed glad to comply. (From far left) Jennylyn Mercado in a gown by Edel Ty; Yasmien Kurdi in an Angelo Bruno original; Shera Madrigal in a Joe Escorio; and Lorna Tolentino in a Paul Cabral. —NOEL A. CRUZ AND LEAH SALCEDO, INQUIRER RESEARCH

# Six months early, Oscars buzz here

TORONTO—MITT ROMNEY six months until Hollywood's biggest party, everyone is already thinking about the Academy Awards. Not many will admit that the thought of winning an Oscar crosses their mind, though.

"Pass," Oscar winner Geena Blanchett said with a laugh, declining to discuss the awards prospects for "Elizabeth: The Golden Age," the follow-up to 1998's "Elizabeth" that earned the actress her first nomination.

Surely people who harvest seeds an Oscar must feel over their shelves?

No," said friend Pitt, a past nominee for "Twelve Monkeys" who delivers a potent performance in the legendary Old West outlaw in "The Assassination of Jesse James" by the Gerrard Robert Ford. "And I don't read the tabloids, either."

Both Blanchett and Pitt's movies are playing at the Toronto International Film Festival, which (without Hollywood and Venice counterparts) marks the unofficial start of awards season by showcasing prestige productions looking to catch some early Oscar buzz.

Whether any festival entries will maintain awards momentum

**DID YOU KNOW...**

Hollywood Movieclips and Martin Jackson split up this week, however there 1 year-old daughter, Mackenzie. In New York last week, the Associated Press likewise reported the breakup of Heath Ledger and Michelle Williams, who have a 2 year-old daughter, Matilda. Hollywood Williams' father, Larry... a prominent stock trader based in Australia while he faces US tax evasion charges—so telling Sydney's The Daily Telegraph: "I feel tremendously for her and for him, and hope they will find what they want in life." AP

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## GALLERIA

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2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 Inibitins: LIGAW LIHIM
4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
5 UNDERDOG
6 EVAN ALMIGHTY
7 FOSTER CHILD
8 DAYWATCH / NANCY DREW
9 1408
10 ROGUE ASSASSIN

**Ligaw Liham**

It's one of the 10 finalists in the 2001 Cinemalaya Digital Film Festival. When Hardie and filmmakers John Michael Lee, this film stars Isabelle Daulat's finest actors John Gilbert Bruno and George Mendoza. Ligaw Liham was shot entirely in Negros.

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## EMPIRE

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 FOSTER CHILD
3 UNDERDOG
4 DISTURBIA
5 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
6 THE BRAVE ONE
7 SHOWWALKERS / 1408

## METRO EAST

1 DAY WATCH
2 UNDERDOG
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 1408
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 DISTURBIA
7 ROGUE ASSASSIN
8 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME

## NOVALICHES

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 UNDERDOG
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 DAYWATCH

## PIONEER

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 UNDERDOG
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME

## STA. ROSA

1 THE LAST LEGION / SIGNOS
2 UNDERDOG
3 SHIKING OF JAPAN
4 THE BRAVE ONE

## LIPA

1 UNDERDOG
2 THE INVASION
3 THE LAST LEGION
4 RUSH HOUR 3

## DASMARINAS

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 UNDERDOG
3 SIGNOS
4 DAYWATCH

## IMUS

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 UNDERDOG
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 DAYWATCH

## ANGELES

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 UNDERDOG
3 HAIRSPRAY
4 DISTURBIA

## TARLAC

1 SHIKING of JAPAN
2 A LOVE STORY
3 EVAN ALMIGHTY

## STARMILLS

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 UNDERDOG
3 SIGNOS
4 HAIRSPRAY
5 DISTURBIA
6 RUSH HOUR 3

## BACOLOD

1 UNDERDOG
2 1408
3 THE INVASION
4 SHIKING of JAPAN
5 PLANET TERROR
6 SIGNOS

## ILOILO

1 UNDERDOG
2 1408
3 THE LAST LEGION
4 THE INVASION
5 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
6 SIGNOS

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Your life as a movie

# High ratings for 2 films with unusual story lines

By Marinel R. Cruz

A FILM ABOUT A MAN WHO RENTS OUT selfless for a living and a teen who makes the transition to teach catechism recently received A and B ratings, respectively, from the Cinema Evaluation Board.

Mel "Buboy" Sta. Maria "Mind for Hire," produced by Artikat Entertainment Media International, got an "A" on account of "the top-of-the-line performance by the actors—down to the last," said CEB chair Clemen Dizon.

"Brod" stars Joel Torre, Jaclyn Jose, Noni Buencamino, Irma Adlawan, Pen Medina, Ryan Eigenmann, Spy Quinto, Patrick Lauren and Gwen Martin. Producers have to muster for the verdicts.

The movie is set in a congested alleyway where the residents are so poor, they could use allied cadavis for their departed loved ones. "The squalor, poverty and lack of peace and order and all the other details in the production design make the film an excellent work of art," said Dizon, citing screenwriter.

"Social satire was invoked masterfully," Imort added, quoting another CEB researcher. "It is a different take from the titillating films he has made." The earlier made story films like "Malibu," "Kabisi," "Kambyo ni" and "Yes!"

An A grade entitles a movie to a 100 percent tax rebate; a B finishes it 50 percent rebate.

The "simple, straightforward and unpretentious storytelling" in Rory Suwat' film earned a B rating for "Mano-Ang."

The board described Ramos as being "at ease with the milieu," prompting one reviewer to comment, "The director must be very intimate with the setting ... or he must have done a thorough research on the topic."

"Mano-Ang" was shot around the Hungduan rice terraces in Ifugao Province. It tells the story of Sister Ashil, who goes to a farming village in Ifugao to teach catechism, and who eventually builds a schoolhouse. Even as she breaks tribal traditions, Sister Ashil makes a big difference in the lives of the townsfolk, especially that of Dumanga's 7-year-old girl in search of her mother.

Zayde said it would have gotten an A, if not for its "slow" pace. However, the reviewers believe it was a deliberate attempt to show "that slow pasma nicely in the highlands."

First-time child actress from Ifugao Village in Hungduan delivered "competent performances," the CEB chair said, adding that Dumanga, the central character, was "thoroughly believable."

CATE Blanchett AS HER BRADPITT

## Six months ...

From page A1

through nominations day on Jan. 22 and the 80th Oscars ceremony on Feb. 24 to make it to be seen. The votes for studios and publicists it usually to root out the films, get the stars and filmmakers to sing for cinematographers at red-carpet premieres and hope the critics say nice things such as "Oscar-worthy performances" or "serious/best picture contender."

### Contenders list

Other Toronto films that will get the once-over by awards watchers include "Michael Clayton," starring Oscar winner George Clooney in a legal drama; director Sean Penn's "Into the Wild," the road-life tale of a young man that comes to a tragic end in Alaska; "The Brave One," with costar Oscar winner Jodie Foster as a vigilante; "Sleuth," an update of the 1972 romp that starred Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine (and earlier nominations, the new version starring two-time Oscar winner Caine to the Olivier role and Jude Law in Caine's part); and "In the Valley of Elah," a murder mystery set among returning Iraq war veterans that stars Oscar winners Tommy Lee Jones, Charlize Theron and Susan Sarandon.

### Who wants it?

"Every actor in the world would be lying if they denied that somehow in their head they had always assumed in was no Dame," Greeney said. "The funny thing is, once you've once-one, you actually have known your expectations of what you thought you'd achieve. I've got a career acting at home somewhere in a room ..."

Oscar watchdoers have resurged from Jilm released early this year, notably best-actress winner Julie Dymnic, who starts in "Away From Her," which arrives on DVD Tuesday. So far, no stars-dunks have materialized such as last year's top acting winners, Helen Mirren for "The Queen" and Forest Whitaker for "The Last King of Scotland." AP

# Rihanna, JT strike gold at MTV video awards

RIHANNA

LAS VEGAS—TEENAGE R&B star Rihanna and pop sensation Justin Timberlake were the big winners at the recent MTV Video Music Awards.

Rihanna picked up the coveted Moon Man Video of the Year award until Monster Single of the Year for her "Umbrella," notably beating R&B master Beyonce, Timberlake, rapper Kanye West and female soul singer Amy Winehouse.

"Were Video of the Year. This was definitely the most important one for me of the night ... the most unexpected for me," Rihanna said, accepting the top Moonman, in the auditorium-themed statuettes she known.

Timberlake, whose "What Goes Around ... Comes Around" marked another year in the UK charts earlier this year, was named Male Artist of the Year.

"It's just exciting to see a new generation of artists really doing it and doing it well," he said. "I think music is in a great place right now because we're all doing what we want to do."

Underground Chicago foursome Fall Out Boy—due to perform in Manila this weekend—picked up the Best Group award. AFP

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2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 DISTURBIA

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1 UNDERDOGS
2 ROGUE ASSASIN
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 UNDERDOGS

GLORIETTA 4
1 UNDERDOGS
2 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 MARY CHEEN / THE INVASION
5 DISTURBIA
6 ROGUE ASSASIN
7 1408

GREENBELT 1
1 ROGUE ASSASIN
2 THE BRAVE ONE

GREENBELT 3
1 ROGUE ASSASIN
2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 DISTURBIA
4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
5 UNDERDOGS

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 THE BRAVE ONE
2 ROGUE ASSASIN
3 UNDERDOGS
4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
5 DISTURBIA

AYALA CENTER CEBU
1 DISTURBIA
2 UNDERDOGS
3 PAIN LAUNDRY
4 1408

MARKET! MARKET!
1 ROGUE ASSASIN
2 1408
3 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
4 THE BRAVE ONE
5 UNDERDOGS

TRINOMA
1 PAIN ALMIGHTY
2 DISTURBIA
3 UNDERDOGS
4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
5 1408
6 ROGUE ASSASIN
7 THE BRAVE ONE

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Marlo Mesina's Album Launch, September 18, 2007, 6 PM at the Activity Center

Greenbelt — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek Presents: Collection of Kaity Tonsitio, September 12 to 23, 2007 at Greenbelt 5 Lobby

Alabang Town Center — Philippine Robotics, September 17 to 18, 2007 at the Activity Center

Ayala Center Cebu — Blind Vision of American Idol Live!, September 20, 6 PM, Grill Edge (Cinema 1)

Market! Market! — Health & Beauty Outlet Sale, September 17 to 20, 2007 at the Activity Center

Christian Life — Repertory Philippines presents Manoy's CINDERELLA Kids at RCP's Onofre Theater - Opens August 11, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 687-4173

Ayala Museum — Museum of Philippine Art: Transmodernism in the Late 19th - 20th century, June 15, 2007 to January 6, 2008 at the Art Floor Gallery. For more info, pls. call 757-7117 (Loc 211) or email museum@ayalamuseum.org

Tri Noma — Samsung Exhibit, An exhibit of the latest Samsung mobile phones, September 10 to 16, 10am to 8 pm, Mezzanine / Food Common Level 2

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AT GLORIETTA 4
and GREENBELT 5 CINEMAS

joshua

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# Chicago Tribune cites 'Tirador'

"TIRADOR (SLINGSHOT)," BELLAVE MENdoza's digital film about troublesome youths, has been lauded by Chicago Tribune critic Michael Phillips as one of the best movies in the recently concluded Toronto International Film Festival.

In the Sept. 14 issue of the Tribune, Phillips described "Tirador" as "a superb drama" from a director "who makes the streets, alleys and crushing deprivations of Manila come to screaming life."

Phillips added: "Shot like a mini-'Boyzin' film with lightweight high-def video cameras, it darts from one acutely observed vignette to another, all relating to a group of pickpockets and their families."

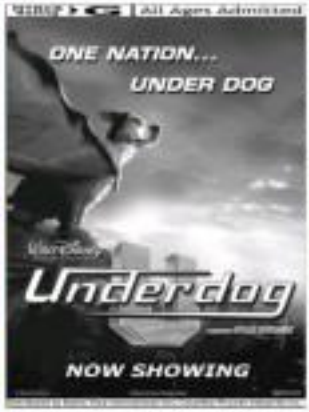
The movie was shot with a hidden camera during the actual Quiapo feast of the Black Nazarene.

"Some of the details break your heart, without the trappings or ironical veneer of melodrama," wrote Phillips. "Director Mendoza's characters are always racing by political posters proclaiming change and hope. All well and good, but as Brecht (maybe not; it. Stood first, sounds later."

The "Tirador" cast includes Jiro Manio, Coco Martin, Nathan Lopez and Jennoffer King.

Its special roles are Jaclyn Jose, Julio Diaz, Simon Ibarra, Harold Alcantara, Angela Ruiz, Bangs Pinlac, Arnaz Reyes and Nico Tirona.

The movie has been invited to next year's Berlin International Film Festival.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## Martin says hard times helped him

'Every singer has to get burned once in a while'

By Pachois Concepcion

MARTIN NIEVERA WALKS into the room and barks: "All right, who made it... who made it through the rain?"

A downpour had delayed the arrival of the entertainment media for the launch of Martin's new album, the double CD "Millennium" (EMI Pilak.) which marks his 20th anniversary in show biz.

The singer/TV host nearly didn't get to finish the project, here as he was on previous his ultimate relationship: a stint in Las Vegas, a dream come-naked by a little performer.

Martin, 45, had done the hotel circuit in Vegas three years ago, and was prepared to do more. It seemed he was ready to settle down in Vegas, too, with current partner Beatrice Ojeda and son Justine.

Then he was duped by, of all guys, a Pinoy businessman who turned out to have a string of bad deals. This happened in March. Instead of heading back for Manila, Martin sought out gigs on his own, and stayed in Vegas for four months.

"I scanned other producers there to see me," he says now. "That was my plan."

Why is Martin so fun about Vegas?

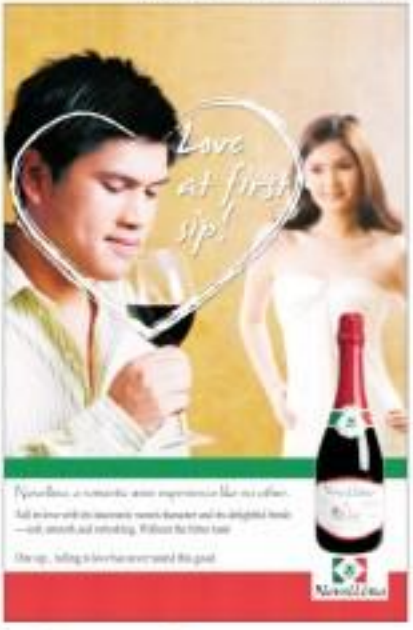
Performers hooked. Does need to be looked down on as desperate. A prime example was Elvis Presley, whose Vegas stint

PAGE 2

### A first for Billboard

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE— Billboard magazine has picked country music singer Julie McBride for its first "Woman of the Year" award. The magazine said the award coincides with its second annual Women in Music issue, which will be published in early October. Billboard group editorial director Tamara Conniff said the country star was chosen for her "wide success in music." McBRIDE, 32, has a new album of duets coming out next month. AP

C-ber Factor



# MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

## MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

# Martin says...

*For diehard fans to sing along with*

"SELFTOWN" is for the diehard Martin Nievera fan. Young writer Ice Seguerra, well known for singing along to most of the covers here, in fact, almost all the tracks are covers, save for three—a live version of "Be My Lady," a fresh take on "Yes Sir, My Sing," and the lone new number, "I Sing," which closes the album.

The discriminating listener, however, will notice that for all the awards that Martin has made as a great pop singer, there are songs that don't work in his favor.

"Innocent" is one example, originally a hot Latin rock

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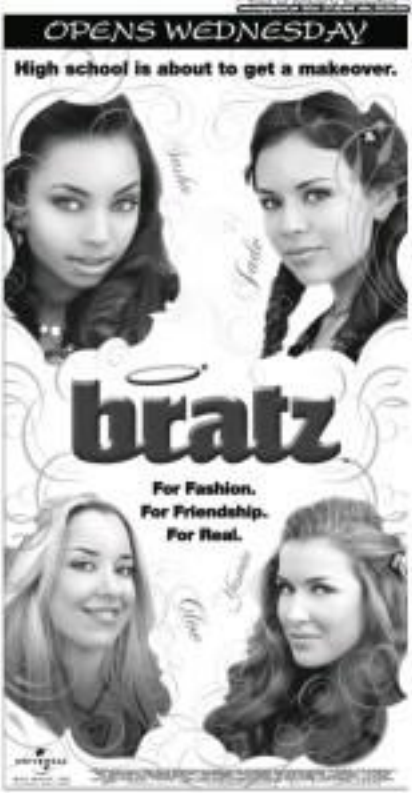
(All Ages Admitted)



# United colors of 'Zaido'

By Reyand Sue Diego Jr.
Photos by Rene Zamora

IF YOU ASK COSTUME DESIGNER Bill Gaerlin, dressing up the stars of the new Kapuso sci-fi/action series "Zaido" was kid stuff.

"I thought of toys," Gaerlin told Inquirer Entertainment. "I saw the boys as action figures and their pads as dolls."

With fellow designer Neal Thomas, Gaerlin made it a simple design philosophy: "Think kids."

He explained: "I asked myself: If I were a child, what toys would I like to play with?"

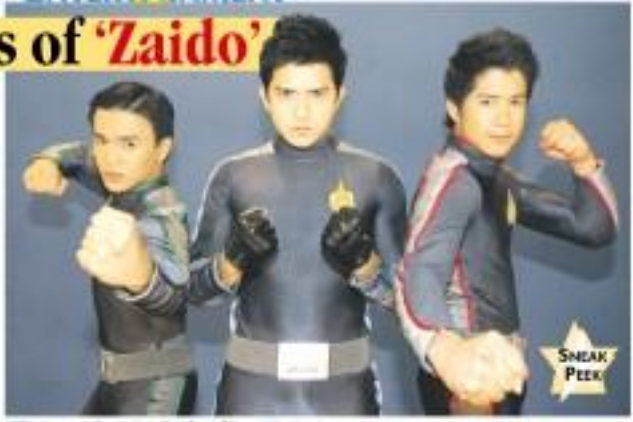
Then, he made sure that his designs for the female stars and villains bowed closely with Power Rangers for the show Metal Heroes—portrayed by Dennis Trillo, Marky Cielo and Aljur Abrenica.

"We wanted a cohesive look; futuristic, science fiction," Gaerlin said.

Power Galactic Force destroy-ray costumes for the three boys are heavily influenced by "Star Trek."

Bobbin Alba, "Zaido" program manager, said that, although GMA 7 acquired the rights for the 1990s series "Zaiden" from Japanese company Toei, the local network was allowed to tweak not only the story, but the costumes and the overall look as well.

WHITE. Amazon Ace's costume is made of stretchable and studded with rhinestones.



METAL Heroes trio, from L, Marky Cielo, Dennis Trillo and Aljur Abrenica.

SNEAK PEEK

PHOTOS shows Jay Manalo in his modern Kapuso-style costume at the Intramuros Bridge.

IAN DE LEON, playing a goodguy general, looks sharp in character.

For example, Ace Bernal's regular Army wears a standard outfit like the one worn by "Zaido" heroine Aiyah, but "the old man wears the classic and looks it more youthful," said Gaerlin.

Baddie Jay Manalo's Dogo looks like a mutant-red Kapunahan in black and red. Gaerlin dressing cohort Rhode Rollos-tayo "like to vision to resist straight Dennis Trillo's."

The female villains, dubbed Amazonas, are color-coded: black, orange, pink and white. "I wanted the girls to look like barbarians, but in sanity orders," Gaerlin explained. He also made use of snakeskin, spandex, rubber and fake leather. "So costumes that jump out of the screen."

A LAST touch-up for Orange Amazon Yumeu del Mural

WHITE Amazon Ace Pinlac prepares for her close-up.

PURPLE Amazon Paolo Ballesteros strikes a pose as cross-dressing villain Ida.

## *Home 'mental hospitals' on 'I-Witness'*

THE HOMEMADE SOLUTIONS families are forced to employ in the face of complex mental problems are explored in the "I-Witness" documentary, entitled "Tapos," airing late tonight on GMA-7.

Little "mental hospitals" inside homes in remote provinces are visited by Kara David.

In one province in the Visayas, Kara meets six different "patients," among them, Teng, who has been tied up the longest. He has been chained around the waist for more than 12 years because of his delusions of violence.

Another patient is Geraldine, who is released to take care of her nine younger siblings. But when the soldiers attack, she, too, must be tied up.

KARA David speaks to one of her subjects.

## Great icons on Discovery

Marudela, Ali, Castro: Three men have shaped history and inspired millions.

Discovery Channel's new series, "The Complete," takes a unique approach to telling the stories of some of the greatest leaders of our time through the eyes of celebrity people.

The series airs starting tonight until Sept. 19 at 9:30 p.m.

The first episode takes viewers into the life of Selena Medello, an unemployed actress who was sentenced to life imprisonment but was released after 27 years and became South Africa's first democratically elected president.

CLICK!

## Sexbomb search on GMA

Five Sexbomb Girls hopefuls—Michelle Miranda, Manilo Rosario, Cristie Gutierrez, Adrienne Fajol and Jessabelle Paragas—will vie for the title "Sexbomb Girl Ultimate Sexbomb Girl: Image" in grand finals of "Ballet Go Kwento ito the Most Result" today on GMA 7.

The winner will receive P200,000 cash with no opportunities, including a management contract under Joy Lozada's Project K.

She will also join the back-up dancers of Sexbomb Bachelle in the mall tours for her "Bachi" album.

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MALL CINEMAS
ROUGE ASSASSIN | I KNOW WHO KILLED ME | THE BRAVE ONE
ARANETA COLISEUM
NCAA FINALS
FALL OUT BOY

## Too much like that other wedding film

By Lourdes B. Bringuelo
Contributor

A WORD OF CAUTION TO THOSE who have yet to catch "My Kuya's Wedding" (Regal Films): Expect nothing more than moderate entertainment.

Toplining Ryan Agoncillo, Maja Salvador and featured Ivy Teppel Lee, the movie—if the title didn't tip you—is not coming—is a rehash of Hollywood's well-loved "My Best Friend's Wedding."

Ryan stars as Jeff, doting kuya to Maja's clingy kid. Dealing with the loss of their father is shaken, and growing up in a household that struggles to make ends meet, Jeff and Kat develop a very strong bond.

Two years of their mother's near-recovery sends this bond. It also sets the stage for the movie's premise: A young girl on the verge of losing the only family she's got tries to break up her big brother's forthcoming wedding.

In terms of setting, Maja is the star here. She turns out a passable, even lovable, Filipina version of Julia Roberts' character—down to perfect details, like the gay best friend, here played by an audio-inflicted K. Rhodora—it's easy to dismiss "Kuya" as yet another copycat.

It's worthwhile to note that, true to form, Regal tried to "improve" on the

REVIEW

DEMALLE, Maja Salvador and Ryan Agoncillo in "My Kuya's Wedding"

formula. Instead of the usual "Best Friend," of course, is the story. But this is also the movie's problem. Could goes to the filmmakers for sounding in their bonafide love for the material everyone knows. But a brother-sister story isn't nearly as fun either, friendly as a romantic crowding.

"Kuya" tries to offset this weakness with Rodante's character. He wouldn't be bride and object of Kat's meditations. Unfortunately, Rodante's performance is unmotivated and falls short of providing the requisite romantic tension. Either that, or her character was really meant to take a back seat.

It might have been interesting if the movie had focused on the sister's desire to face conflict. Then again, that might have made "Kuya" a rehash of another Hollywood hit, "Monster-in-Law." Any more of rehashing, and we are just decide to dild-wedding like this altogether.

## *Praise, complaint for kiddie reality series*

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO—A CBS reality series in which youngsters run their own town has prompted complaints from some of the children's parents, and now family staff of New Mexico's child-protection laws.

"Kid Nation," slated to premiere Sept. 18, was filmed over 40 days during April and May in a movie-set town in the high desert not far from Santa Fe.

About 40 parent-approved children made available by CBS posted the production at ranch, well-supervised and a learning experience, one mother has told authorities the conditions amount to abuse investigation.

Jason Hiller of Fayetteville, Georgia, said his 8-year-brother Chase—an old daughter, Brood Miles, was quartered on her face with grease while cooking potatoes on a wood stove, and that their other children required medical attention after they accidentally drank bleach.

Her daughter also had a cavity that had caused swelling, and residues on her face and hands, Hiller wrote.

Miller declined to talk to a reporter, referring calls to CBS.

Tom Forman, the show's executive producer, confirmed the grease-spattering and bleach-sipping incidents, but called them the kinds of accidents that can happen "in any kitchen, in any school, in any home, in any camp," and said that the children immediately got medical attention.

The children in the show, ages 8 to 15, headed west, prepared meals, obeyed a government and passed laws.

"The whole concept of the show is 40 kids who build a world of their own," Forman said.

The children are to be paid $5,000 apiece when the series airs, and their per episode was awarded a solid gold star by the town's elected government worth $20,000, Forman said.

"The series was filmed responsibly and within all applicable laws in the state of New Mexico at the time of the production," CBS said in a statement.

DID YOU KNOW...